

Gal 10 66a

A N
Historical ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE *and* REIGN
OF
DAVID,
KING *of* ISRAEL.

Interpersed with Various
CONJECTURES, DIGRESSIONS,
and DISQUISITIONS.

In which (among other Things)
Mr. BAYLE's Criticisms upon the *Conduct* and
Character of that PRINCE, are fully considered.

*And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of
water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season.
His leaf also shall not wither. Psalm I.*

By the Author of *Revelation Examined with Candour.*

BOOK II. VOL. II.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. OSBORN, at the *Golden Ball* in *Pater-noster Row*;
and Sold by S. BIRT, and B. DODD, in *Ave-Mary Lane*;
C. HITCH, in *Pater-noster Row*; S. AUSTEN, J. HINTON,
and J. RIVINGTON, in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*; T. HARRIS,
on *London-Bridge*; and W. SANDBY, near *Temple-Bar*.

M. DCC. XLII.

To his GRACE

W I L L I A M

DUKE of *Devonshire*,

Lord Lieutenant of IRELAND.

IF this work shall find as much favour with posterity, as the preceding part of it hath done with the present age, let it be no dishonour to the name of *Cavendish*, (if this letter should live to inform them) that it was written in *Ireland*, under your Grace's government, and honoured with your

A 2

patron-

[iv]

patronage — A patronage, which, however distinguished by the advantages of high station, most noble birth, and a long line of illustrious ancestors, had yet neither been desirable to this author, nor sought by his friends, had it not been eminently distinguished by those virtues, which give birth and station their true dignity : clear, unfullied, unsuspected honour, in the patron's public character ; and every amiable quality, in his private : conjugal fidelity and affection ; paternal tenderness, exemplary humility, sincere and steady friendship, and extensive charity : and all these founded upon their only true and solid basis ; true Religion.

[v]

MY LORD, it is the proper province of the annalist, and the historian, to do justice to your grace, in your public capacity ; to inform posterity, in how steady and uniform a tenour of honest zeal, and unaffected fortitude, you have ever asserted the distinguishing character of your noble family ; Loyalty to your Sovereign, unsevered from the true love of Liberty, and your Country. In a word, it is their business to tell, with what integrity you filled and adorned the greatest stations.

THESE are the duties of their province ; and let them be their themes : but let me be allowed, for the interest of virtue, to mention one thing, which may not fall within their observation ;

[vi]

to thank your Grace, in the name of thousands, for your enlarged and iterated bounty to the poor of this city, in the day of their calamity ; when frozen with cold, and famished with hunger, in the severest season this region ever felt, your liberality opened 'the way to the most generous charity that ever relieved so great a distress.

THESE, my Lord, are acts of goodness, which should be known, for the benefit of mankind, in the blessing of good example: and the more, because their authors are studious to conceal them; for they are the fruits of that truly christian virtue, which *vaunteth not herself*.

G O D be praised, my Lord, there are yet instances, in the
highest

[vii]

highest stations, *of pure religion, and undefiled before Him, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

MAY your Grace long enjoy all the blessings, that naturally and providentially await so amiable a character, and derive them to a late, and a numerous posterity! And may I be allowed to hope, that it will be no disadvantage to you with them, that this address attends you, from a man who should be presumed superior to flattery, because he is understood to be above dependence; one who would not, (if he knows himself) for any vanity of this world, disgrace *The Life of DAVID* with the imputation of one untruth prefixed to it; one, who

[viii]

whilst he wishes to do honour to your name, has not the least ambition either to distinguish or perpetuate his own ; and therefore desires to be known to the world by no other than that of

Your GRACE'S

Most dutiful, and

most obedient,

humble servant.

THE
CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION. xiii

CHAPTER I.

DAVID goes to Hebron, and is elected King
by the Tribe of Judah Page i

CHAP. II.

Abner asserts Ishbosheth's Claim to the
Crown. The Battle of Gibeon 9

CHAP. III.

Children born to David in Hebron. Abner
revolts to him, and is slain by Joab 18

CHAP. IV.

Ishbosheth's Murder — A Militia of a
most excellent Model instituted by David.
Mr. Bayle's Censures upon David's In-
trigues with Abner, considered 35

CHAP.

CONTENTS.

CHAP. V.

David is crowned by all Israel page 50

CHAP. VI.

David takes Jerufalem 62

CHAP. VII.

David enlarges Jerufalem. His Alliance
with Hiram. He builds a Palace, and
marries more Wives 72

CHAP. VIII.

A Digression, containing a short Description
and Account of Jerufalem 83

CHAP. IX.

The Philistines and neighbouring Nations
invade Israel, and are defeated in two
Battles 94

CHAP. X.

David attempts to remove the Ark to Sion :
and at last succeeds 114

CHAP. XI.

The Conclusion of the Procession of the Ark.
Mr. Bayle's Censure of David's Dancing
and Dress, considered 132

CHAP. XII.

A Digression, containing a short Inquiry, in
what Part of the City of David the Ark
was deposited 156

CHAP.

C O N T E N T S. xi

C H A P. XIII.

*A Dissertation upon Dancing, in which
David's Dancing before the Ark is ex-
amined and vindicated* page 162

C H A P. XIV.

*David designs to build a Temple, but is for-
bidden. GOD's Promises to his Posterity.
David's Thanksgivings* 183

C H A P. XV.

*David invades Philistia, and takes Gath, &c.
— He then invades and subdues Moab*
200

C H A P. XVI.

*David conquers the Syrians and Edomites.
— Hadadezer proved to be the Hadad of
Nicolaus Damascenus. Some Difficulties
in the Sacred Text cleared* 213

C H A P. XVII.

*A short Account of David's Ministers.—
His Cherethites and Pelethites* 237

C H A P. XVIII.

*David inquires after Saul's Posterity, and
finds Mephibosheth, a surviving Son of
Jonathan's, whom he treats as his own* 247

C H A P.

CHAP. XIX.

David's *Embassadors abused by the Ammonites.* — *A War ensues* page 258

CHAP. XX.

The Syrian War finished. — *David's Felicities during this Period summed up.* — *This Book ends.* 272

INTRO.

INTRODUCTION.

***H**ITHERTO the life of DAVID hath led the reader through a great variety of surprising scenes, and interesting events; events the more interesting, because many of them were such as are incident to every man alive: inasmuch as all men are within the reach of malice; and very few placed beyond the reach of power and oppression. We have seen an obscure young man signally distinguished by the favours of Heaven, and made the instrument of deliverance to a distressed people; and in that deliverance, a signal instance of humility, and trust in the Divine Providence, triumphing over pride and self-sufficiency. We have
seen*

xiv INTRODUCTION.

seen this obscure youth become, by his virtues, an object of envy to a great monarch; and that monarch, with the advantage of a noble person, and excellent endowments, deformed by that single vice, beyond expression; made odious even to his own family, and led insensibly into the most hateful and cruel enormities; drawn, by degrees, from the fear and love of GOD, whose favour and protection he had so signally experienced, and driven into the extremities of superstition; and, in consequence of both these, drawing down the just judgments of GOD upon his own head, and involving his family in his ruin. O would princes be warned, by this example, to take care how they provoke that great Being by whom they reign!

INTRODUCTION. xv

reign! how they allow themselves in any one habitual violation of his commands!

ON the other hand, let the fortunes, the successes, the deliverances of this obscure youth, (resting himself wholly upon the protection and providence of GOD, and humbly submitting to his dispensations, and in the end crowned with success) be, to all mankind, a lecture of humility, and intire resignation to the great Arbiter of the world; who, with equal ease, poureth contempt upon princes, and exalteth the lowly and meek. By what means and measures this was effected, in the case of DAVID, shall be the business of the next book to explain. In the course of which, the reader, of less attention, may,
I hope,

xvi INTRODUCTION.

I hope, find some amusement; the serious, something more than entertainment; and the truly religious, solid satisfaction. Major rerum nunc nascitur ordo. *A series of greater scenes now opens to our view; attended with greater objections to the character of DAVID, and more difficulty to remove them: all which naturally send a thinking writer to the Father of lights, and Fountain of wisdom, for aid and direction in so great an undertaking.---*

Thou therefore---O SPIRIT, that dost prefer,
Before all temples, th' upright heart and pure,
Instruct me; for thou knowst. ---

--- What in me is dark,---

Illumin; what is low, raise and support:
That, to the height of this great argument,
I may assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of GOD with Men.

A N

Historical Account

Of the LIFE and REIGN of

King *DAVID*.

B O O K II.

CHAP. I.

*DAVID goes to Hebron, and is elected
King by the Tribe of Judah.*

WHEN *David* had given a due time to his grief for *Jonathan*, and mourning for *Saul*, he then applied himself to that GOD, who had appointed him to the kingdom, to know when and by what means he should best be put in possession of it: And being directed by GOD to go up to *Hebron*, a city of *Judah*, he went thither, with his two wives, (*Abi-*

noam and *Abigail*) and whole household; as did all his followers with theirs; and dwelt in that and the adjacent cities.

HEBRON was situate in the midst of the tribe of *Judah*, on the top of a ridge of high mountains, equally famed for fruits, herbage, and honey: Mr. *Sandys* seems to have surveyed the whole region round it, with uncommon rapture; and the very learned and accurate Dr. *Shaw* hath considered it with singular care and attention: He observes of that region, that it is admirably fitted for olives, and vineyards, and, in many parts, for grain and pasture; and consequently, for the continuance of that blessing upon *Judah* in his lot, *his eye shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk*. We may judge of the value of this mountain, when we reflect that it was given to *Caleb* as a peculiar favour and reward of his fidelity to GOD, (*Jos. xiv. 13. and 14.*) and of its fruitfulness, by the numbers it supported; for it was a principal part of that mountainous region of *Judah*, which, in the reign of *Jehoshaphat*, mustered *seven hundred and fourscore thousand mighty men of valour*, 2 *Chron. chap. xvii. ver. 14, 15 and 16.*

THIS

the Life of King DAVID. 3

THIS then seems to be a region peculiarly fitted for the reception of *David* and his men, with less inconvenience to the country: for there they might then dwell (as *Dr. Shaw* tells us the inhabitants do now) in greater numbers, and with greater advantages: for here (saith he, *p.* 368.) they themselves *have bread to the full, whilst their Cattle browse upon a richer herbage, and both of them are refreshed by springs of excellent water, &c.*

BESIDES this, *Hebron* had also other advantages; it was a *levitical*, priestly, and patriarchal city; venerable for the sepulchres of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; and, as tradition adds, of *Adam* also*; and upon all these accounts long reputed, as it is at this day, even by the *Turks*, holy†; and honoured with the title of the *chosen*, or *beloved*. *God* had before appointed it for the resi-

* It was confessedly one of the most antient cities in the world. *Moses* tells us, (doubtless with a view of refuting the fabulous antiquity of the *Egyptians*) that it was built seven years before *Zoan* in *Egypt*, (*Numb.* xiii. 22.) which was the capital of *Pharaoh*, at that time; for there *Moses* wrought his miracles, *Psal.* lxxviii. 12.

† *Helena*, the mother of *Constantine* the great, built here a goodly temple, over the cave of *Macpelah*, now converted to a mosque, and the cave continually lighted with lamps.

4 *An Historical Account of*

dence of his favourite servants ; and it was now peculiarly fitted for the reception of *David* ; as being the metropolis of his tribe, and the possession of those priestly families who favoured his interest, as their duty to GOD required they should. His anointment to the regal office by *Samuel* had long since ceased to be a secret ; and GOD's late more immediate designation of him to it, declared by the mouth of the same prophet at *Endor*, was doubtless by this time sufficiently known ; and the determination of the metropolis in his favour would naturally be of great weight to influence the whole tribe. Nor were other inducements wanting, to engage them to concur in the same resolution. It was natural for them to prefer one of their own family ; *Jacob* had long since predicted the establishment of the sovereignty in the tribe of *Judah* ; *David* was of that tribe, beyond all dispute, elected, and appointed to succeed *Saul* ; and what had they to do, but to concur with the predeterminations of Providence in his favour ? And accordingly we find, that he was quickly elected to the sovereignty of that tribe : *and the men of Judah* (saith the text) *came, and there they*

the Life of King DAVID. 5

they anointed David king over the house of Judah; 2 Sam. ii. 4. Whether they did this with more dispatch, to influence the determinations of the other tribes in his favour; or whether it was delayed, until their dispositions were founded upon the point, is no-where said. This is certain, that one tribe's acting separate, and independent of the rest, was of dangerous example; nor could any thing but the divine authority justify it; and therefore it is not probable, that this step was taken, until all other expedients for an unanimous election failed. And here began the division of the kingdom, so lately predicted by *Samuel*.

WHILST *David* continued at *Hebron*, there was a continual resort of people to him from all the tribes, who gradually fell off from the house of *Saul*, and owned him for their sovereign; amounting in the whole (but we may presume not until after the death of *Iskboobeth*, his competitor) to three hundred forty-eight thousand eight hundred armed men. *At that time* (saith the text, *1 Chron. xii. 22, &c.*) *day by day there came to David to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God.* And as the or-

6 *An Historical Account of*

der in which they came is set down, we find those of *Judah*, as it was natural, first; those of *Simeon* next (for their *inheritance*, we are told, *was within the inheritance of the children of Judah* *); the *Levites* and *Aaronites* after them; then came a detachment from the house of *Benjamin*, (which bordered immediately upon *Judah*) but in a smaller number (three thousand only); *for as yet the multitude of them*, saith the text, (that is, the greatest number) *kept the ward of the house of Saul*. However, so considerable a desertion from that tribe seems to have greatly encouraged all the rest; for those that followed, came in in vastly greater numbers.

THE first account we hear of *David* after the election of his tribe, is his kind message to the men of *Jabesh Gilead*, for their heroic humanity, in rescuing and burying the bodies of *Saul* and his sons, which the *Philistines* had fastened to the walls of *Bethshan*. The men of *Jabesh* could not forget the great deliverance which *Saul* had wrought for them, in the beginning of

* *Jsh.* xix.

the Life of King DAVID. 7

his reign, when he rescued them from the cruelty of *Nahash the Ammonite* (1 Sam. ii.); and therefore they now thought themselves bound in gratitude to rescue him and his sons, as far as in them lay, from the indignities they endured from the hands of the *Philistines*. *The valiant men arose* (saith the text, 1 Sam. xxxi. 12, 13.) *and went all night, and took the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, from the wall of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt* them there; and they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.* They travelled at least ten miles by night, through a rough country, in the possession of their enemies, passed the *Jordan*, and took these bodies from the walls (from within the town †) of a powerful and hostile city; and returned the same night, burnt and buried their remains, and mourned seven days for them, fasting every day until night.

THIS heroic instance of gratitude and humanity, *David* thought himself obliged to recognize in a distinguished manner; and

* As the custom was in case of a plague, *Amos* vi. 10. probably because they were now in an infectious state.

† 2 Sam. xxi. 12. from the street of Bethshan.

8 *An Historical Account of*

therefore, as soon as he heard it, he sent messengers to congratulate them upon it, with prayers for the divine blessing in requital of their gratitude and affection to their sovereign; and an assurance that he also would requite them: notifying at the same time his advancement to the throne, by *Judab*; and exhorting them to shew themselves sons of valour, *although their master SAUL was dead*; intimating that he being now invested with the regal office, was ready to protect them, as *Saul* had done; perhaps too insinuating, that true fortitude required them to assert the cause of justice, and leaving them to judge whose that was.

WHAT effect this message had upon them, we know not; yet I think we may fairly conjecture it had a good deal; since we find that upon this half tribe's joining with *Reuben* and *Gad* to come over to *David*, they made up together a body of an hundred and twenty thousand men.

CHAP. II.

Abner asserts Ishbosheth's Claim to the Crown. The Battle of Gibeon.

ONE of *Saul's* Sons yet survived, whose name was *Ishbosheth*, who being in all probability less martial than the rest, went not to the war; though now advanced to the age of ambition, and not pass'd the ardour of youth, having reached his fortieth year, at the time of his father's death *. A man of this character would in all probability have easily resigned his claim to the crown, and submitted to *David*, had he not been asserted and supported by the power of *Abner*, the son of *Ner*, *Saul's* general, and near kinsman; whose interest and ambition (and it may be, his envy also) strongly sway'd him against his duty. For it appears sufficiently from the sequel of his history, that he was well acquainted with *David's* divine designation to the throne; but, should he now submit to it, he must

* This shews him to have been born in the first year of *Saul's* reign, who reigned forty years. *Acts* xiii. 21.

10 *An Historical Account of*

no more hope for the supreme command of the army. *Joab* was in possession of that (though not formally vested with it) under *David*; and well deserved to be so: and it was not probable he would displace him, a tried friend, and a near kinsman, to make way for an inveterate enemy, newly reconciled.

NOR was this all: *Ishbosheth* was *Abner's* near kinsman; whom if he did not support, the interest of his tribe, and of his family, must fall with his own.

ADD to all this, that *Abner* commanded under *Saul* in all the expeditions he made against *David*: and it appears sufficiently from the history, that *David* was greatly an overmatch for him, in all military conduct and skill: nay more, I think, it appears, from the adventure of the camp, when *David* had both the king and the general in his power, that he upbraids *Abner* with pretending to more merit from his military skill, than he was justly entitled to.—*Art not thou (Abner) a valiant man, (saith he *) and who is like to thee in Israel?*

* 1 Sam. xxvi. 15.

Where-

the Life of King DAVID. II

Wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? Reproaches of this kind are not easily forgiven in rivals; especially in rivals successful and superior.

THESE then are the difficulties that seem to have obstructed *Abner's* submission to *David*; envy, ambition, interest, and personal pique. And nothing is more difficult, than a steady pursuit of duty with so many obstructions in the way: and therefore, whilst *David* was soliciting his interest with *Judah*, *Abner* solicited that of *Iskbofeth* with the rest of the tribes.

HIS first care was to move the compassion of the army in his favour: and to this end, he carried him about through the camps, as the vulgate, *Grotius*, and *St. Jerome*, translate the expression; and then gained the tribes gradually to his interest: but the *English* translators, by the word *Mahanaim*, (whose literal translation is *camps*) understand the city of that name, in the tribe of *Gad*, beyond *Jordan*; and the sequel of the history sufficiently justifies that translation. Here *Iskbofeth* fixed his residence: and the first part of the country gained to his interest,

terest, is said to be that of *Gilead*, in the half tribe of *Manasseh*, on the other side *Jordan* also, and contiguous to *Gad*; where *Isboseth* could reside with more safety, out of the reach of *David*, and the *Philistine* incursions. *Abner* then proceeded to *Ashtur*, and so on gradually through the rest of the tribes, until he came to *Benjamin*, and fixed his residence in *Gibeon*, formerly the metropolis of the *Gibeonites*, and made, after the league with them, a *Levitical* city.

FROM *Abner*'s fixing his residence with his forces in this place, I think we may fairly infer, that it was now possessed by men in whom he could confide; and consequently, not by *Gibeonites*, the mortal enemies to his house. And if not by *Gibeonites*, it could of right be only inhabited by *Levites*, because it was a *Levitical* city, although in the tribe of *Benjamin*. And how *Isboseth* could gain such confidence with the descendants of *Levi*, whose brethren his father massacred, is not easy to conceive; unless these were *Levites* put in possession of that city, when *Saul* extirpated the *Gibeonites*, in his zeal for the children
of

of *Israel*. But I think it much more probable, that they were friends of his own, whom he placed there by violence and wrong: as GOD had predicted of him by *Samuel*, 1 *Sam.* viii. 14. *And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, the best of them, and give them to his servants.*

How long *Abner* resided here, we cannot say; probably for the two first years of *Ishboseth's* reign: for so long *David* and he seem to have lived quiet, without any act of hostility on either side; each in the mean time (doubtless) extending and strengthening his interest, the best he could.

HITHERTO *David* seems carefully to have avoided all acts of hostility, and determined not to begin them; waiting patiently for the divine disposal of affairs in his favour. But when he found, that *Abner* had drawn together a body of men at *Gibeon*, he thought it adviseable to send some forces under *Joab* *, to observe and attend them. They came in sight of one another, near the pool of *Gibeon*; *Abner* on one side of the pool,

* With his two brothers *Abishai* and *Asahel*, all three sons of *Zeruiah David's* sister.

14 *An Historical Account of*

and *Joab* on the other; and there they sat down quietly, on each side, for some time; until *Abner*, in the wantonness of military cruelty, made a motion, that twelve young men of each party should rise up and *play* * before them, as he called it. One would expect, from this expression, to hear of a combat between men dextrous in the use of their arms, and the science of defence; such as was seen in the gladiatorial shews at *Rome* (which they also called plays). But it was quite otherwise; they rushed on one another, like so many ruffians; each seized his antagonist's beard †, or hair, and plunged his sword into his body, and *they fell down together*.

THIS conflict was the prelude to a fierce and general engagement, which immediately followed; in which *Abner* was put to flight,

* I have heard it remarked by an accurate observer of nature, that almost all the plays of all animals have a resemblance of fighting: and soldiers, who sport with death, seem to consider fighting but as a rougher kind of play.

† *Plutarch* tells us in his apophthegms, that all things being prepared for the fight, *Alexander's* captains asked him, whether he had any thing else to command them? *Nothing*, says he, *but that the Macedonians shave their beards*. *Parmenio* wondering what he meant, *Don't you know*, says *Alexander*, *that there is no better hold in fight than the beard?*

with

the Life of King DAVID. 15

with the loss of three hundred and three-score men on his side, and but nineteen on the side of *Joab*, besides his brother *Asabel*. A loss to him irreparable, and unspeakable ! He was a gallant man, and one of *David's* twelve captains ; remarkably valiant, but more remarkably swift, *light of foot* (saith the text) *as a roe in the field*. *Asabel* unfortunately singled out *Abner* in his flight, and pursued him personally ; but his ambition to take his spoils, pushed him upon his fate. *Abner* did all he could to dissuade him from his design ; pressed him more than once, to turn aside from him ; *Turn thee aside to the right hand, or to the left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take his armour ; but Asabel would not.*— He pressed him again by the friendship he had for his brother, to turn from him ; and, when that would not do, he stabbed him with the hinder part of his spear, and slew him upon the place.

CICERO finely observes of civil wars, that all things are miserable in them, but victory most of all.

JOAB and *Abishai* continued the pursuit, probably without knowing the fate of their brother

16 *An Historical Account of*

brother *Asabel*, as we may conjecture from their subsequent moderation.

WHEN *Joab* came up with *Abner*, who had by this time drawn up his forces on the top of a hill, *Abner* immediately began a parley with him; caution'd him from carrying things to an extremity; and put him in mind, that they were his brethren, whom he thus pursued to death. The force and beauty of the original is inimitable: *Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not, that it will be bitterness in the latter end?* &c. These questions carried conviction with them; *Joab* felt it, and immediately desisted, and called back his forces; upbraiding *Abner* at the same time, that if it had not been for his rash challenge, the armies had parted in peace, and without any act of hostility in the morning (which plainly shews that *Joab's* instructions were, not to begin hostilities). For so some (and I think) rightly understand those words—*As the Lord liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother.* Tho' others understand them very differently, in the sense mentioned in the next paragraph.

WHOEVER

WHOEVER attends to this parly, as it is laid down in the Bible, will, I believe, find something in it, not unlike that between *Hector* and *Ajax*, in the 7th book of the *Iliad*. *Hector* had given the challenge; and when night came on, and the heralds thought it time to give over the combat, *Ajax* insists that *Hector* should first make the motion. The challenge here comes from *Abner*, and he begins the parly of cessation, and *Joab* (for so some understand the text) swears solemnly, that if he had not done so, he would have pursued him the whole night. *As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone away every one from following his brother. So Joab blew the trumpet, and the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more.*

THEY now took their different routs. *Joab* marched all night, until he came to *Hebron*; as *Abner*, on the other hand, made the best of his way to *Jordan*; crossed it, and rested no-where, until he reached *Mahanaim*, *Joab* in all probability hastening home, not only to give an account of his conduct to *David*, but also to do the last

offices to the remains of his brother ; and *Abner* to get out of the reach of *David's* forces.

CHAP. III.

Children born to DAVID in Hebron.

ABNER revolts to him, and is slain by JOAB.

THE battle of *Gibeon* is the only one we hear of, throughout the course of this war between *David* and *Ishbosheth*, which lasted about five Years: during which time, the text tells us, *David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul weaker and weaker.* One circumstance that added strength to *David's* cause, was the number of children born to him, in this interval; viz. *Six sons.* Children are the natural strength of all families, but more especially those of Kings. *Sons* (saith *Euripides*) *are the pillars of regal houses:* and *Tacitus* tells us, they are firmer fences of empire, than fleets and legions: but *David*, in a nobler strain than either of them, agreeably to the
 supe-

the Life of King DAVID. 19

superiority of his genius, expresseth the same sentiment, (but without any limitation) with surprising dignity: *Like as the arrows in the hand of the giant, even so are the young children.*

ISHBOSHETH stood single; but *David's* right would remain with his posterity: and adherents naturally multiply with the supports of right.

BUT here I must beg leave to observe, (little to the honour of polygamy) that *David* had but six sons, by six wives, during the space of seven years.

THEIR names, their number, and their mothers, are to be found 2 *Sam.* iii. One of these wives seems indeed to have been taken out of policy; *Maacab* the daughter of *Talmai*, king of *Geshur*. For it appears, both from the book of *Deuteronomy* * and *Joshua* †, that *Geshur* bordered upon the half tribe of *Manasseh*, beyond *Jordan*; and the alliance of a prince so situated, must have been of great consequence to *David*, in his contests with *Iskbosheth*, whose chief strength seems to have lain in that tribe.

* Chap. iii. 14.

† Chap. xiii. 13.

THE *Jews* give another account of this matter. They say, that *David* took *Maacah* captive, when he invaded the *Geshurites* (I Sam. xxvii. 8.) But they forget what follows in the same chapter; that he took no prisoner throughout the whole course of those wars; but put all to the sword, both men and women, that came in his way; the better to conceal his measures from *Achish*. But to proceed:

THE text tells us, that during the continuance of these contests, *Abner* made himself strong for the house of *Saul*: and then immediately follows, an account of *Ishbosheth's* charging him with having gone in to his father's concubine. Both these circumstances put together, will, I think, ground a just suspicion, that *Abner* meant to set up for himself, when he was strong enough to throw off the mask, and lay *Ishbosheth* aside: it being clearly enough to be collected from the course of this history, that an attempt upon the king's concubine was then understood as an attempt upon the crown.

HOWEVER this might be, *Abner* was enraged at the charge; broke out into bitter
resent-

the Life of King DAVID. 21

resentment*; and ended with an oath, that he would fulfil the promise of GOD to *David*, to translate the Kingdom from the house of *Saul*, and to set up the throne of *David* over *Israel*, and over *Judah* from *Dan* even to *Beersheba*. And accordingly he set himself to do so, from that moment; taking the most effectual measures to fulfil his menace.

HE immediately sent messengers to *David*, with offers of submission and allegiance, upon certain conditions, with an assurance also, of bringing about all *Israel* likewise to pay him allegiance. These conditions were readily agreed to by *David*; who stipulated no condition on his part, but that of having his wife *Michal* restored to him.

THIS, Mr. *Bayle* considers, as a great cruelty in *David*; to ravish her from a husband who loved her so well: that is, Mr.

* *Am I a dog's head, &c. that thou chargest me to day with a fault concerning this woman?*

Some commentators have suggested, I think with more ingenuity than truth, as if *Abner* resented his being charged with brutal lust in that affair; and put upon the level with a dog in that point; an animal that was shut out of some of the heathen temples, upon that account. As a lewd woman seems to be put upon a level with that species of brutes, in that prohibition *Deut. xxiii. 18. Thou shalt not bring the hire of an harlot or the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow.*

22 *An Historical Account of*

Bayle thinks it a great cruelty in *David* to disturb *Phaltiel* in an adultery that was agreeable to him; and to redeem *Michal* from one, in all appearance, detestable to her, to restore her to her only husband; the husband of her affection, and her choice; for whom she had so much tenderness, as to save his life, at the hazard of her own. Were it possible to examine Mr. *Bayle's* heart, I dare say, he was full as angry with *Mene-la-us* for disturbing *Paris*, and with *Agamem-non* for disturbing *Ægisthus*, in their amours. And it is certain, that *Helen* and *Clytemnestra* were much more to be pitied in the violence done to them; for theirs were adulteries of their own choice, but *Michal's* was forced upon her; and for the rest, they had full as much right to dispose of themselves to their gallants, as *Saul* had to give *Michal* to *Phaltiel*. Surely then, *David* could not be cruel in doing what it had been highly inhuman and iniquitous not to do; he therefore stipulated to have his wife, who was cruelly ravished from him, restored to him. And at the same time, he sent to *Ishbosheth* to demand her of him, as his undoubted

doubted right ; having paid a dear dower of an hundred *Philistine* foreskins for her*. *Ishbosheth* immediately sent and took her from *Phaltiel*, and *Abner* conducted her to *David*; *Phaltiel* still following and weeping, as far as *Baburim*, upon the confines of *Jerusalem*, until *Abner* would suffer him to follow her no further. *Phaltiel* was in distress ; but it was such a distress as all they endure, who are grieved to restore what they have no right to possess : and Mr. *Bayle* from the same principles, upon which he quarrels with *David* on this head, is obliged to be highly offended with every honest man, who desires to have those goods restored to him, of which he once was robbed under all the circumstances of cruelty and iniquity. And therefore, in truth, *Phaltiel* is no proper object of pity ; and yet, his distress, upon this occasion, is, I think, one of the finest pictures of silent grief, that any history hath left us. Conscious he had no right to complain, or molest *Michal* with his lamentations, he follows her at a distance, with a distress,

* *David's* humility is here remarkably conspicuous : a hero of a lower class would have mentioned the full price paid down : which was *two hundred foreskins*.

24 *An Historical Account of*

filent and self-confined; *going* (saith the text) *and weeping behind her*. However such fine paintings of nature pass unregarded in the sacred writings, I am satisfied that in *Homer* we should survey this with delight.

DAVID's address is, I think, very distinguished on this occasion. In the first place he knew, that his alliance to *Saul*, when *Michal* lived with him in the character of his wife, would make the friends to that house less averse from his claim: and therefore he makes it a fundamental condition in his league with *Abner*, that she should be restored, and restored by him. Nor was there any objection to *David's* receiving her again, since, altho' she lived as a wife with another man, she did so without being divorced by *David*; who, if he had once repudiated her, could never receive her again*.

IN the next place, tho' *David* secretly stipulated with *Abner* to bring back *Michal* to him, yet he openly applies to *Ishbosheth* to have her restored. This freed *Abner* from the necessity of taking violent measures to restore her; and at the same time gave him a

* *Deut.* xxiv. 4.

fair opportunity of conferring with *David*, under the character of her conductor, without coming to an open breach with *Ishbosheth*.

IT appears from the history, that *Abner* had an absolute ascendant over *Ishbosheth*. For, when he threatened openly to transfer the kingdom to *David*, *Ishbosheth* did not dare to make him any reply: and, if he now had a mind to be *Michal's* conductor, who could controul him?

HOWEVER, before he went, he took care to commune with the elders of *Israel*, and gain their consent to his purpose.

ABNER had as little religion, as many other ministers of state: and yet, in his conferences with the elders of *Israel*, he put the matter principally upon their duty to GOD. He told them, that *David* was the man they formerly wished for their king: and now was the time to put their wishes in execution. Nor ought they to hesitate upon doing so, since he was the man by whom GOD had declared he would deliver his people *Israel* from the *Philistines*, and from all their enemies.

THIS,

26 *An Historical Account of*

THIS, doubtless, was a prophecy then well known amongst them: and the streights they were in from the *Philistines*, who hemm'd them in closely on all sides, made it the more readily received.

WHEN *Abner* had settled all things to his desire, he then waited upon *David* in person, to give him an account of all these conferences, and the issue of them: and was received, with his twenty attendants, as the restorer of *Michal*, and the messenger of so much good news, should be, with great joy and festivity. *David* feasted him and them; and *Abner* renewed his engagements to bring over all *Israel* to him.

How empty and ill-founded are the purposes of vain man! *Abner*, who promises kingdoms, cannot ensure to himself one single hour of life. *David* had sent him away, and he departed in peace, when *Joab* returned from some expedition against the enemy, in which he had got the better; and hearing what had passed, immediately went to *David* in the pride of his success, and the great spoil he had taken, to expostulate with him upon the folly of receiving *Abner* in that manner, and placing any confidence in him,
who

who only came thither to betray him. And then leaving the king, apparently, without waiting for his answer, he sent messengers after *Abner*, (unknown to *David*) to bring him back : and when he returned, going up to him, under the pretence of a friendly salutation, he stabb'd him. Envy doubtless, and jealousy of *Abner's* great merit with *David*, in gaining over the tribes to him, were main motives to this base action, as well as revenge for the blood of *Asabel* ; though it seems to have been concerted between the brothers, solely upon the foot of revenge : at least they avowed no other motive ; as appears from the text ; which tells us, *So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asabel.* One or both these were the real motives of the murder, though the pretence was fidelity to their sovereign, and excess of care for his safety.

WHEN *David* heard of this bloody murder, he cried out, (appealing to the Searcher of hearts for his innocency) *I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord for ever, from the blood of Abner the son of Ner : then breaking out into a bitter, but probably, a pro-*

28 *An Historical Account of*

prophetick imprecation, he calls down the vengeance of GOD for it, upon the head of *Joab*, and his posterity; agreeably to GOD's own declaration, that *he will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation.*

AFTER this, the king commanded a general mourning to be made for *Abner* *; wept over him; and buried him with all solemnity; himself attending upon the bier; which was not the custom of kings. And added this lamentation, which every eye will discern to be truly poetick, in the most literal translation; tho' none have pretended to determine the measure.

As dies the criminal, shall *Abner* die,
 —Thy hands not bound,
 Nor to the fetters were thy feet applied:
 —As is their fate, that fall
 Before the faces of the sons of guilt,
 So art thou fallen †.

* And it is remarkable that the command began with *Joab*. 2 *Sam.* iii. 31.

† He was killed as a traitor; but had he been really so, he should have died in chains and fetters, after a fair trial.

the Life of King DAVID. 29

AT the recital of these words, the grief became universal, and the whole people wept anew.

I CANNOT help observing, that *David* here laments a man, who, if he had survived, would in all probability have been the author of great evil to him. It should seem, that neither *Joab* nor *Judah* could well bear his being placed at the head of *David's* forces (for probably this was the first condition stipulated on *Abner's* part) and if he were so placed, he seems to have been of a temper, to boast, (like the great Earl of *Warwick* under *Edward* the IVth) upon any occasion of discontent, that he could make and unmake kings at his pleasure; and was daring enough to take his measures accordingly. So that his death, was, in all probability, one of the greatest blessings that could befall *David*.

WHEN any one died among the *Jews*, it was customary with the friends of the family, to resort to the house immediately after the funeral, and bring the best provisions they had along with them, to support and refresh their friends in affliction, to the utmost of their power. And surely a more humane
and

30 *An Historical Account of*

and benevolent usage never obtained in any country. The presumption was, that people in affliction forgot, or, it may be neglected, their proper refreshment, at a time when they most needed it; and therefore it was the business of friendship, and one of its kindest offices, to supply that care. Agreeably to this usage, all the people waited upon the king, *to cause him to take meat*, as the text expresseth it, *whilst it was yet day*; but *David* absolutely refused to touch a morsel; and confirmed the refusal by an oath, that he would taste nothing *'till the sun went down*. He was resolved to clear his innocence by all the tests of real sorrow; and to satisfy the people, that this was a just occasion of grief, he put them in mind of his dignity to whom he paid it: *Know ye not that there is a prince, and a great man, fallen this day in Israel?*

THIS conduct had its success; the sincerity of the king's sorrow was seen by all the people; and he was universally acquitted of all guilt in *Abner's* death. Nor was this all: He took care to let his servants know, (and they doubtless took care to inform the people) that nothing but the weak and unsettled condition

the Life of King DAVID. 31

condition of his affairs, hindered him from executing just vengeance upon the author of it*.

IN short, his whole behaviour on this occasion gave great satisfaction to his people; as every part of his conduct did: *As whatsoever the king did* (saith the text) *pleased all the people.* Rare felicity of princes! Or shall I add, felicity peculiar to *David*?

WE learn from hence, that *David* was universally agreeable to his people: and it may be, the advantages of his person did not a little contribute to his being so.

IT hath been observed by writers of all kinds, how much dignity a graceful mien and person have always given to kings and commanders; and I shall beg leave briefly to observe, once for all, that *David* had these advantages, added to all his other accomplishments, beyond most, if not all other mortals. His beauty hath already been mentioned, his size was suitable; *Saul's* armour fitted him, and *Saul* we know *was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upwards* (1 Sam. x. 23.). His own praises

* 2 Sam. iii. 39. *And I am this day weak, though annointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruah, be too hard for me.*

and

and thanksgivings to GOD, for the various blessings of his being, demonstrate him remarkably swift and strong* ; all which plainly infer dignity of person, and fair proportion. We cannot help forming to ourselves some idea of persons we admire, however imperfect ; and mine of *David's* person, hath, I own, been modelled by that of *Claudian's Stilico*†.

*Jam tunc conspectus, jam tunc venerabilis ibas,
Spondebatq; ducem celsi nitor igneus oris,
Membrorumq; modus, qualem nec carmina
 figunt
Semideis. Quacunque alte graderere per urbes,
Cedentes spatiis assurgentesque videbas.*

The moment we behold you, we admire!
The radiant eye proclaims the valiant chief!
The limbs so siz'd, and shap'd, as poets paint
Heroes and demi-gods, less finish'd forms!
Thro' ev'ry city, as you pass rever'd,
All rise respectful, and with joy give place.

* *Thou makest my feet like harts feet; mine arms can break a bow of steel,* Psalm xviii. 33, 34. Which I am well assured no man now alive can do.

† De laude Stiliconis, Lib. I.

But

But to return :

IT is hardly possible to dwell upon any relation like this of *Abner*, without being drawn into grave and serious reflections in consequence of it.

A great man fallen, and fallen by so unexpected and so surprising a treachery ! and in the very article of returning to his duty ; and in the eve of a great revolution, seemingly depending upon his fate !

TRUE—but then this great man sported with the lives of his brethren ; and perhaps deliberately opposed himself to the dictates of his known duty to GOD, for a series of years. He spilled the first blood shed in this civil war ; and, it may be, all that was shed : at least, we hear of none, after the battle of *Gibeon*. This is evident, *David* declined all occasion of combat with his adversaries ; we hear of him no-where out of *Hebron*, during the whole course of this long civil war. This surely may be numbered among his felicities, never to have drawn his sword upon a subject, in a contest of seven (and a war of five) years continuance.

34 *An Historical Account of*

IT is true, *Abner* was now returned to his duty ; but it is as true, that he returned to it now, as he departed from it before, upon a pique ; and from motives of ambition, interest and revenge. He well knew the purposes and declarations of God in relation to *David*, and yet he deliberately opposed himself to them. And it is but just in the appointments of providence, (and nothing is more conspicuous in his government of the world) not to permit the wicked to effect that good, from wrong motives, which they once obstructed upon the same principles. The occasions of duty once notoriously neglected, seldom return, at least to equal advantage. Let no man decline the good that is in his power ; if he once does so, he is no more worthy to be the happy instrument of effecting it, in the hand of God. — To conclude ;

A GREAT revolution apparently depended upon *Abner's* fate ; but it did so only in the eye of human providence ; as was plainly manifested from the event.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

ISHBOSHETH'S *Murder*--*A Militia of a most excellent Model instituted by DAVID. Mr. BAYLE'S Censures upon DAVID'S Intrigues with ABNER, considered.*

WHEN *Iskbosheth* heard of *Abner's* death at *Hebron*, the text tells us, that *his hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled*. He was greatly dismay'd, as well he might; for he was in effect disarm'd: he had lost both his sword and his shield in *Abner*. The people too were greatly concerned; for they lost their great and powerful agent with *David*; the man, in whom both he and they confided; the man (from his authority and credit both with the army and people) best able to conduct and confirm the league, then agreed to on both sides. — But this perplexity did not last long.

36 *An Historical Account of*

ISHBOSHETH had two men, who were captains under him; *captains of bands*, the text styles them: but whether of regular forces, or some flying party, whose business was spoil and prey, is not certain: we are only told, that their names were *Reckab* and *Baanah*, the sons of *Rimmon*, a *Beerothite*, of the tribe of Benjamin. These men came to *Ishbosheth's* house at noon-day, upon pretence, whether of bringing in or taking out wheat, is not clear from the text; and finding him in his bedchamber, retired (as it is customary in hot climates) from the heat of the day, and fast asleep, they smote him, and cut off his head; and made the best of their way, travelling with it all night, until they came to *David* to *Hebron*.

WHY the circumstance of their fetching wheat is mentioned, is not so much as conjectured by any of the commentators; and yet, I think, to an attentive reader, it is obvious enough. For, as their purpose was to cut off *Ishbosheth's* head, the pretext of carrying corn, gave them a fair opportunity of conveying away the head, in one of their sacks.

As

the Life of King DAVID. 37

As soon as they reached *David*, they produced their horrid present; and said to the king, *Behold the head of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, thine enemy, which sought thy life: and the Lord hath avenged my lord the king, this day, of Saul, and of his seed.*

DAVID, struck with abhorrence and detestation of the villainy, cry'd out to them, in a solemn appeal to God, *As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity, when one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, I took bold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who thought I would have given him a reward for his tidings; how much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house, in his bed? Shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hands, and take you away from the earth?* He then immediately commanded them to be slain, and their hands and feet, the instruments and messengers of murder, to be cut off, and hanged up over the pool at *Hebron*, as monuments of terror to treachery; and ordered *Ishbosheth's* head to be buried in the tomb, which he erected for *Abner*.

38 *An-Historical Account of*

THE reader will observe, how finely *David's* indignation is painted in that hurry and impetuosity of his language, which carries him directly to the *Amalekite's* execution, without waiting to mention any circumstance that tended to alleviate his guilt; and yet he adds, as if he had mentioned them all at large, *How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person, &c.* If he put the *Amalekite* to death, for but barely saying that he slew *Saul*, even at his own command, and when his life was despaired of, how much more should he take signal vengeance of their united and aggravated treachery, and murder? *Saul* might have some guilt in the *Amalekite's* eye, from his former destruction of the *Amalekites*; *Ishbosheth* had none with regard to his murderers.

IT is a fine reflection that fell from *Darius*, upon finding that *Bessus* was plotting against him: He told the traitor, " That
 " he was as well satisfied of *Alexander's*
 " justice, as he was of his courage: that
 " they were mistaken, who hoped he would
 " reward treachery; that, on the contrary,
 " no

“ no man was a more severe avenger of
“ violated faith, than he was.”

IT was upon this principle, that *Cæsar* put *Pompey's* murderers to death; and that the *Romans* sent back the *Faliscian* schoolmaster, under the lashes of his own scholars.

THERE is no one villainy, the human soul so naturally, so instinctively abhors, as treachery; because it is, perhaps, the only villainy, from which no man living is secure: and for this reason, every man must take pleasure in the punishment of it.

THE manner of *David's* appeal to GOD on this occasion is also very remarkable; *As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity* — It was from GOD only, that *David* sought for deliverance from his enemies; and he that doth so, needeth not the aid of treachery. Even they that need it, are often observed to punish it: they that need it not, always will. And surely vindicative justice is then seen in its greatest glory, when it is exerted in the chastisement of guilt committed against an enemy: for then, no mist, either of partiality or prejudice, can misguide or obscure it.

40 *An Historical Account of*

THE fate of *Ishbosheth*, considered in all its circumstances, is a subject worthy our most serious meditations. A prince slain by his own soldiers, puts one in mind of that observation of *Augustus*, that *It was dangerous to have no guards, but more to have them.* Here *Saul's* son is slain by treachery;—the treachery of two of his own captains, and of his own tribe; the sons of a *Benjamite* of *Beeroth*. Commentators are mightily at a loss, why *Beeroth* is here mentioned, under those particular circumstances, of its belonging * to *Benjamin*, and of the *Beerothites* flying to *Gittaim*: but I hope, the reader will have some light into the matter, when he considers, that *Beeroth* was a city formerly belonging to the *Gibeonites*, (within the lot of *Benjamin*) but most certainly not inhabited by them, when the *Beerothites* fled to *Gittaim*, after the defeat of *Gilboa*; for *Gittaim* was a *Benjamite* city†: and had those *Beerothites* been *Gibeonites*, they would

* The expression in the text is remarkable.---*Beeroth* was reckoned to *Benjamin*; that is, it was numbered among the cities within their lot: but, strictly speaking, was the property of the *Gibeonites*.

† *Nehemiah* xi. 33.

have fled to any region of the earth, rather than to the protection of the tribe of *Benjamin*; the tribe of *Saul*, the mortal enemy to their race. What then are we to infer from the flight of the *Beerothites* to a *Benjamite* city at that time, but that they themselves were *Benjamites*? And how could this city be then inhabited by *Benjamites*, otherwise than by the expulsion and eradication of the *Gibeonites*, when *Saul* destroyed them? And what reason was there for *Saul's* destroying them, but to give their possessions to his friends the *Benjamites*? And certainly there can be no doubt upon the point, when we find them, in fact, possessed of that city.

HERE then, the divine *Nemesis* is very remarkable. *Saul* cut off the *Gibeonites*, to make way for his *Benjamites*; and two of these very *Benjamites*, the sons of a *Benjamite* of *Beeroth*, cut off his posterity, the chief stay and hope of his house; and did this against all the dictates of duty, gratitude, and natural affection.—How adorable and how dreadful are the divine retributions of vengeance!

As

42 *An Historical Account of*

As the sacred historian informs us, that *David* spent seven years and six months at *Hebron*, and yet relates no transactions of that whole time, from the coronation of *Ishboseth* to his death, except the battle of *Gibeon*, the restoring of *Mickal*, and the revolt and death of *Abner*; the reader's curiosity naturally prompts him to inquire, and to search out, if possible, how this space was filled up. This, I own, hath been my case; and I imagine I have found materials on which to ground a rational conjecture upon this point, in the xith and xxviiith chapters of the 1st book of *Chronicles*, and the xxiiid of the 2d book of *Samuel*. From these three chapters it appears, that *David* had settled the whole affair of his militia, the chiefs and commanders of his army, their number and order, before the battle of *Gibeon*.

It appears from thence, that he had appointed twelve courses of military men for the service of the year; each course consisting of twenty-four thousand men, with their proper officers included, to do military duty, where-ever occasion required, one month in every year.

It

the Life of King DAVID. 43

IT appears also, (as I apprehend) that the officers of each course were ordinarily the fathers of the principal families, of which that course consisted; for this, I think, is the most natural interpretation of those words, 1 Chron. xxvii. 1. *Now the children of Israel after their numbers, the chief fathers, and captains of thousands, and hundreds, and their officers, that served the king in any matter of the courses, (which came in, and went out, month by month, throughout all the months of the year) of every course, were twenty and four thousand.* That is, the people of every course, and their fathers, the officers, made up a body of twenty and four thousand men. So that as on the one hand, there was little fear of cruelty and tyranny in the commanders; there was, on the other, as little apprehension of mutiny and disobedience in the soldiers, when the power of their commanders was in the order of their natural authority; and at the same time, as every officer had the honour of his own soldiers, that is, of his own family, near at heart, and they the honour of their fathers and officers, this engaged the commanders to be more diligent in instructing
and

44 *An Historical Account of*

and forming their foldiers to military skill and difcipline, and the foldiers to be more diligent in their obedience and difcharge of duty.

IT appears alfo from the fame fore-cited paffages, that *David* had three commanders in chief, of the firft order, three of the fecond, thirty-one of the third, and thirty of the fourth *: and that all this was fettled before the battle of *Gibeon*, is evident; forasmuch as *Afabel*, who was there flain, is, in two of thefe places, put at the head of the firft thirty, and in the third, at the head of the fourth monthly courfe. Now how this could be done, without a fufficient trial and experience both of their capacity and prowefs, either in martial prizes, mock combats, or real engagements with the enemy, is not to be imagined.

THAT many skirmifhes and martial adventures intervened in this time, is out of all doubt; for the facred hiftorian tells us, *there was long war between the houfe of Saul and the houfe of David*. There was long war, but, I prefume, little bloodfhed; inafmuch as we hear of no battle during this

* 1 Chron. xi. 42.

whole time, besides that of *Gibeon*—However, as the men were continually in action, I think it not irrational to consider this whole time as principally employ'd by *David*, in training, exercising, and disciplining his troops—so that at the conclusion of it, *David* had, in all probability, more martial men, and well train'd forces, within his dominions, than it may be all the princes now in *Europe* put together. Two hundred and eighty-eight thousand men were trained and disciplined in the single tribe of *Judah*, every year of this interval; so, that at the end of these seven years, we may consider the whole tribe (to the amount of near half a million of men) as thoroughly finished in all martial accomplishments: besides the accession of three hundred thousand valiant men, which came over to him from the other tribes.

I WILL venture to add, that *David* hath left behind him the best model for a militia, that ever this world beheld: such a model, as it would be the truest wisdom and interest of every nation under heaven to imitate.

FOR, first, by this institution, every man in *Israel* became, in his order, a regular well-disci-

46 *An Historical Account of*

disciplined soldier, in perfect consistency with his being at the same time, a free-holder, and a free-man. The protection and security derived to himself and to his country from this wise institution of his sovereign, laid him under all the engagements of duty and fidelity to his prince, without any temptations either to forego or betray any duty he owed to his country. Suppose him brought into the course of this discipline one month in twelve, (and it is certain he could not be brought into it so often) and maintained by his prince for that month, he had still but one part in the well-being of his prince, and eleven of that of his country.

IN the next place, the state by this institution enjoy'd all the advantages of security from foreign invasions, and intestine disturbances, (I mean the security of repelling and repressing them) derived to it from a standing army; and at the same time, avoided all the evils of it; great expence, luxury, and corruption of every kind, from want of due employment for such great numbers; immense detriment to the publick, from so many hands unemploy'd in useful labour; and immense danger to its liberties,
from

from their too great attachment to the person and power of the prince, in consequence of their intire dependence upon him.

THE judicious reader's own reflections will easily suggest to him many more advantages arising from this establishment: and to those I refer him.

IF it be asked, What becomes of the king's prerogative in this constitution? I answer, It sufficiently appears, from this history, that he had (besides civil employments) his guards and garisons, (which, I think, were the only standing forces of the realm) and the appointment of the officers and commanders in chief, over the army in time of war, and over the monthly courses, in time of peace (the common men were elected by the tribes): which I apprehend (with intire deference to better judgments) to be a proper balance of power*.

I CANNOT conclude this chapter, without observing, that one part of *David's* conduct within this space, hath afforded

* It is true, Mr. *Harrington* thinks this a model established by *Moses*. Be it then a divine institution, (as I am very well inclined to believe it) yet thus much is certain, that there are no traces of its ever having been put into practice, before the days of *David*.

48 *An Historical Account of*

his revilers new matter of calumny against him.

MR. *Bayle*, (the modern father of infidelity) the only reviler I shall do myself the honour to take notice of on this occasion, observes of him, that he himself owned “*Isbbofeth* to be a *righteous man*, and consequently a lawful king, and yet he entered into intrigues with *Abner* to dispossess him.”

WHAT pity it is, that some very ingenious and very learned men will not inquire and examine with a little care and candour, before they decide—The distinction surely is very plain: *Isbbofeth* might have been a *righteous man*, and yet no rightful king. He might not have been satisfied of *David's* divine designation to the throne, (few courtiers take care to convey such disagreeable truths to the ears of their masters) and consequently, he might have been innocent and upright in his opposition to *David*. Will it follow, that *David* was criminal in asserting his right, or *Abner* in returning to his duty? and, if not, certainly there was no guilt in *David's* conferring with *Abner*, and taking all proper measures to recover that right.

BUT

BUT suppose this not the case with regard to *Ishbosheth*; suppose him well acquainted with *David's* divine designation to the throne; yet still he might have been righteous with regard to *Rechab* and *Baanah*, though not with regard to *David*. That he was not, in strictness, either a righteous man, or a lawful king, is out of all doubt: For he could be neither, when he seized the throne, knowing the lawful heir to be then living. And can it be doubted, whether he knew that *Mephibosheth*, the son of *Jonathan* his eldest brother, was then alive?

THE text tells us on this occasion, that *Jonathan*, *Saul's* son, had a son, that *was lame of his feet, and was five years old, when tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel; and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame.*

MEPHIBOSHETH was lame, but his lameness no way affected his title to the crown. I know no law of GOD which prohibited a lame man to reign in *Judea*, as the pretended oracle did at *Sparta*.

COMMENTATORS think this circumstance was inserted in the relation of *Ish-*

boſketh's murder, to ſhew the encouragement *Rechab* and *Baanab* might have to commit it, from the youth and infirmity of *Mephiboſketh*, who was the *avenger of blood*. I have no controverſy with them upon that point: I only beg leave to add, that his hiſtory is equally pertinent to my purpoſe, to ſhew in what ſenſe, and in what ſenſe only, *David* could call *Iſhboboſketh* a righteous man: for it is highly probable, that he was not ſo with regard to *David*; and moſt certain, that he was not ſo with regard to *Mephiboſketh*.

CHAP. V.

DAVID is crowned by all *Israel*.

UPON the death of *Iſhboboſketh*, *David's* right to the throne was recognized by all the tribes. *Then* (ſays the text) *came all the tribes of* *Israel* *to* *David* *unto* *Hebron*, *and* *ſpake*, *ſaying*, *Behold*, *we are thy bone and thy fleſh*: *Alſo in time paſt*, *when* *Saul* *was king over us*, *thou waſt he that leddeſt out and broughteſt in* *Israel*: *And the Lord ſaid*

the Life of King DAVID. 51

said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel.

DAVID's right and merit now triumphed over all opposition that could be made against him. When *Abner* and *Ishbosheth* were dead, whose authority swayed the *Israelites* against their duty, they then acknowledged *David's* divine right to the crown; they then remembered, that he had every qualification requisite to a rightful king of *Israel*, according to *GOD's* own limitations, in the xviith chapter of *Deuteronomy*; that he was one of their brethren, and that he was chosen of *GOD*. They then remembered his valour, and various merits to his people; and the many deliverances he had wrought for them. In one word, they then remembered not only the election, but also the express declaration of *GOD* himself in his favour; that he would make him the shepherd and captain of his favourite people: and when they had thus recollected his undoubted title and merits, and their own duty, they immediately convened to crown him.

AND here the learned *Dr. Patrick* very justly observes, that this is the first time we

meet with any ruler or governor of a people, characterized under the idea of a shepherd; and I cannot but think it remarkable, that the first man so characterized, was at first in fact a shepherd; and when we find him after his advancement to the throne, still characterized by GOD himself under the same idea, what can be a clearer inference, than that GOD's raising him to be a king, was but exalting him to a nobler office, of the same nature with his first?

How fine a document is this to princes, that they are not, in the intention of Providence, the tyrants, but the guardians of their people! that their business is the preservation and well-being of the flock, from the duty they owe to the great LORD and owner of both! And how fully is this document confirmed to us, when we find bad princes set forth, in the prophetic style, under the characters of *roaring lions, hungry bears, and devouring wolves!*

HAD *Caligula* rightly considered this, it would have mortified his idle vanity, in imagining himself to be (as an emperor) a being of a better nature than those he ruled,

as shepherds are of a species superior to sheep *. He would indeed have found himself, in the character of a good emperor, and shepherd of his people, superior, and more dignified; but of a different species from them only in his character of a tyrant; not so much raised to a god, by his right to rule, as debased to a brute, by his abuse of it; whether to one of *Ezekiel's* bears, *Zephaniah's* wolves, *Jeremiah's* leopards, or the *Psalmist's* crocodiles, or all these, or more than all in one, his own brutality should best determine. How much more had he ennobled his nature, and raised at once his own character, and his people's felicity, had he adopted that truly noble and princely maxim of *Cyrus*, that *every man that aspired to the government of others, should take care to be a better man than those he ruled!*

BUT to return.

AMONG the thousands of *Israelites* which crowded to *David* on this occasion, there is particular mention made † of two hundred of the children of *Issachar*, who had understanding of the times, to know what *Israel*

* *Philonis legatio ad Caium.*

† *Chron. xii. 32.*

54 *An Historical Account of*

ought to do. These were *the heads* of that tribe, and all their brethren were at their commandment. These were men well skilled in all the parts of political prudence; who understood the true interest of their country, and what to advise in every exigency, as the occasion and circumstances of the times required. Their superior wisdom was acknowledged by their brethren, who committed themselves to their direction: and their declaration in *David's* favour, was in effect the decision of the whole tribe. And who knows but those last prophetic words of *Moses* concerning *Issachar* in the xxxiii^d chapter of *Deuteronomy*, might have a special reference to this great occasion? *They shall call the people unto the mountain: there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness.*

IF this be understood of the mountain of *God's* house, it is certain it was not their business either to call the people thither, or to offer sacrifices; nor is there any known instance where they ever did so: But, on the other hand, it is as certain, that they now called the people to the mountain of *Hebron*, to make *David* king; where sacrifices were offered by all the people, previous to his

CORO-

coronation. And sacrifices offered in ratification of a covenant then entered into, with upright intentions on both sides, might very properly be styled *sacrifices of righteousness*. And this interpretation seems to be strengthened, by the reason of this authority in *Issachar* here annexed by *Moses*; *for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand*. This is a plain prediction of commercial skill and wealth in that tribe. Commerce naturally affords those advantages, on which *Homer* founds the superiority of *Ulysses's* wisdom; that *he had seen the manners and cities of many men*. And these advantages, added to superior wealth, in *Issachar*, gave that tribe a natural superiority to call the people to the mountain to submit to *David*.

AFTER all the tribes had resorted to *David* at *Hebron*, recognizing his right to the throne, the elders of all *Israel* assembled there also, to put the crown upon his head.

BUT here it is well worth our observing, that previous to the conferring of that important trust upon him, the text expressly declares, that *king David made a league*

56 *An Historical Account of*

with them in Hebron, before the Lord; and (then) they anointed David king over Israel.

WHAT this covenant was, into which *David* now entered, is not expressly declared. The *Jews* think it was an act of oblivion and indemnity for all injuries done on either side, whether of *Judah* against the other tribes, or all the other tribes against *Judah*: But then the league would rather have been between the tribes, than with the king. And therefore, I think, we cannot reasonably doubt, that this league included a great deal more; that *David* thereby obliged himself to govern according to the law of *GOD*; and the people promised to obey him agreeably to the same law; and both ratified their engagements by solemn sacrifices, and appeals to *GOD* for the sincere and upright performance of them.

BUT here it is asked, How *David* could make a covenant with the people in *Hebron* before the Lord, inasmuch as the ark exhibiting the divine presence, was not there at this time?

TO this it is obvious to answer, that any covenant entered into with solemn oaths, and attestations of the Divinity, may very pro-

properly be said to be made in his presence : not to insist, that *David* considered Almighty GOD as more immediately present in the congregations of the princes of his people, (*Psalms* lxxxii. 2.) such a congregation as was now assembled.

NOW, in all probability, was erected that altar to which *Abshalom* afterwards resorted, under pretence of performing a vow * ; unless we will rather suppose, that the altar built here by *Abraham*, (*Gen.* xiii. 18.) and without doubt preserved by *Isaac* and *Jacob*, was yet in being.

I SHALL make but this one short observation upon this league which *David* entered into with his people, previous to his coronation ; that the doctrine of absolute unconditional obedience seems not to have been received in those days.

THE people that resorted to *David* on this occasion, amounted in the whole to three hundred forty-eight thousand eight hundred valiant men, and experienced warriors ; besides the elders of *Israel*, the princes and magistrates of the several tribes : all united as one man, and, what is more

* 2 *Sam.* xv.

58 *An Historical Account of*

extraordinary, all *Israel* consenting with them, as it were with one heart, to make *David* king.

THIS vast assembly of brave men, their princes and leaders, the king, with a magnificence truly royal, feasted for three days together *; not with that mad profusion, nor in those refinements of *Sybaritic* and *Persian* luxury, which we meet with in the boasted entertainments of antiquity. We have here no account of costly rarities; no goblets and vases of the richest metals and ornaments; no golden couches, or gorgeous embroideries; no naked boys, and minstrels; no temptations to vileness; no allurements to excess; no dazzling and inviting abominations; in one word, no *Neronian*, *Vitellian*, *Alexandrine*, or *Egyptian* extravagancies and outrages of expence: nothing but a magnificence of the earth's best blessings, her noblest productions, in her native abundance, and salutary simplicity, and a bounty best resembling her Maker's: *Bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen;*

* Which however was scarce possible to be effected, had not the contiguous tribes made timely preparations for them, as the text assures us they did.

meat,

meat, and meal; cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins; and wine, and oil, and oxen and sheep abundantly †: a festivity, not the pure effect of vanity, and a waste of wealth, as that of *Crassus*: not protracted, as that of *Nabuchodonosor's* *, to such a luxurious and wasteful length, as tended rather to enervate fortitude, than inspire it; nor polluted, as some of those of the best heathen princes ‡ were, with lewd ceremonials, and detestable imitations of their fabled divinities: but begun and hallowed with sacrifices to the true GOD; and continued (we cannot doubt it) with his praises; ending in peace and unity, and the blessing of a general joy: *For* (says the text) *there was joy in Israel.*

THE conjecture may be thought too adventurous, as it is contrary to the title of the psalm, and to the interpretations of all commentators, (and yet I cannot help offering it to the reader) that the ixth psalm was composed upon this occasion, and upon this only § sung, as it now stands, in the assembly

† 1 Chron. xii. 40.

* *Judith* i. 16.

‡ See *Suetonius* in *Octavio Cesare*, cap. 70.

§ It was written when the *Israelites* were dispersed and driven out of their dwellings by their enemies--- *thou hast scat-*

60 *An Historical Account of*

bly at *Hebron*; and with those variations which we find at the cviiith psalm, after the taking of *Jerusalem*. This I am sure of, and this only I will venture to pronounce, that this *Michtam*, (as it is called) this golden memorial of *David*, suits this occasion, and no other that I know of.

DAVID here promises himself, in a prophetic rapture, the dominion over *Moab* and *Edom*. He considered himself as that rod which should rise out of *Israel*, and smite

scattered us, v. 1. When they were in terror, and divided amongst themselves, *thou hast made the earth to tremble and divided it*. This was exactly the condition in which *Israel* was from the death of *Saul*.---The *Israelite* cities contiguous to the *Philistines*, were deserted by their inhabitants after the battle of *Gilboa*; and soon after, the kingdom was divided under *David* and *Ishbosheth*.

David now beseeches God to heal the divisions of his people, *Heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh*: And that was done, when they all joined to make *David* their king at *Hebron*. God had now given them a centre of union, to which they might resort, as the forces of a broken army to their standard---*Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth*. *David* was the only centre of union that people ever had, and God now made him the captain and ruler of his people, to manifest the truth of those promises long since made to him.

David here sings, in the rapture of a man who had just recovered his right, *Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine*---*Gilead* and *Manasseh* were just before in the possession of *Ishbosheth*; no king of *Israel* but *David* was ever dispossessed of them, and recovered them again.

the

the Life of King DAVID. 61

the corners of Moab, and make Edom a possession (Numb. xxiv. 17, 18.); and undoubtedly he was so. He next dares *Philistia* in a bold irony to triumph over him; plainly intimating that it should not long do so. And what king but *David* subdued the haughty *Philistines*, conquered *Moab* first, and *Edom* after? And when could this prophecy be written, but in the beginning of his reign, (when the *Philistines* were triumphant) and before he had made any of these conquests?

IT appears from this psalm, that *David* expected to be brought by GOD into a strong city, before he was brought into *Edom* by him. *Who will bring me into the strong city, who will lead me into Edom?* *Jerusalem* is the only city so characterized, which *David* took before his war with *Edom*.

HE concludes, imploring the divine aid, with a resolution, that, on this presumption, he and his people would act *valiantly*: and accordingly they marched directly to *Jerusalem*, and took it by storm.

CHAP. VI.

DAVID *takes* Jerufalem.

THAT this psalm is preparatory to some great and martial purposes, cannot be doubted by any man that reads these words in it, *Wilt not thou, O God, go out with our hosts? through God will we do great acts; for it is He that shall tread down our enemies.* And with what martial purpose could *David* so properly and so prudently begin his reign, as with an expedition against that people which GOD had commanded the *Israelites* to extirpate for their abominable pollutions, in order to dispossess them of a strong hold, which they yet retained in the heart of his kingdom?

ALL the martial men of the nation were now assembled together, their spirits raised with a magnificent and princely entertainment, and their hearts elated with joy; united in a firm league, under a martial and magnanimous prince, and an eminent leader. Such an union naturally inspired confidence in their own power and prowess; and, in consequence of this, a readiness and an ardour

the Life of King DAVID. 63

dour to undertake some great atchievement; *David* was too wise and too brave a captain, to let this ardour cool. There was nothing wanting to keep it up, but a firm confidence in GOD; and nothing could inflame it, but an assurance of discharging duty towards him.

THE strong-hold of *Zion* was still in the possession of the *Jebusites*, their chief, if not their only fortress; and consequently the resort not only of the remains, but the refuge of that abandoned people; like that city of *Thrace* which *Philip* of *Macedon* peopled with all the miscreants* of his country, that other places might not be infested with them. To take this fortress, would be to signalize the beginning of his reign to great advantage; and to extirpate that abandoned race, would be at once to bless mankind, and to obey GOD.

WHOEVER considers the genius of *David*, will find him thoroughly disposed to apply himself to GOD upon every occasion. This was not only the strong bent, but is the distinguishing characteristic, of his spirit. The

* Calling it *Poneropolis*, or the city of *miscreants*.

64 *An Historical Account of*

soul of piety breathes fervent and predominant in him. Is it to be imagined then, that he would enter upon this great enterprize, this initiating adventure of his reign, without prayers and hymns to the great Guide and Governor of his life? That many of the psalms are martial hymns to GOD, is out of all doubt. *Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered---** is evidently the beginning of such a hymn, alluding to that prayer of *Moses* (*Numb. x. 35.*) and in general all those psalms that recount the mercies of GOD to the people of *Israel* from the beginning: and nothing sure could better inspire a well-grounded confidence into that people, than a recapitulation of the many, the mighty, the miraculous deliverances from time to time wrought for them; interspersed with ejaculations of thanksgiving, and concluded with an assurance, that GOD would still continue his mercy and loving kindness towards them.

TAKING it for granted then, that *David* omitted not this noblest of all incitements to fortitude on this occasion; I shall not how-

* *Psalms* lxxviii.

ever take upon me to pronounce upon the particular hymn then made use of; but barely offer that conjecture which seems to me the most rational upon the point; that the cxxvth psalm was composed and sung upon this occasion.

It was evidently made, when some of those nations which were to be extirpated, were yet in possession of some part of the land, which GOD had allotted to his people; as *Jerusalem* now was in the possession of the *Jebusites*: and contains a prediction agreeable to GOD's own declaration, that it should not remain in their possession. Let us suppose, what will not, I believe, be disputed with me, that a council of war was held before this attempt was made upon *Sion*; and that the bulk of the people were for it, but some against it. The reasons for opposing it must principally be two: the danger and the iniquity of the attempt. The danger and difficulty were confessedly great; the place being so strong, impregnable and inaccessible. And besides, it might be thought unreasonable to invade a people with whom many of the *Israelites* were now in alliance, as in fact many of these execrable nations still lived in

66 *An Historical Account of*

the same cities with the *Israelites*; and we cannot doubt had alliances and intermarriages with them. Consider this psalm then as an answer to these objections, and nothing can be clearer than the sense and pertinency of it to this occasion.

WAS the fort of *Sion* strong and impregnable? They that trust in GOD are more so: they are as the very rock on which that fort stood. Was *Jerusalem* difficult to be assaulted on account of those inaccessible mountains which surrounded it, and on which it stood *? GOD was a much surer defence to his people, than the most inaccessible mountains could be to that city. Was *Jerusalem* the original and rightful possession of the *Jebusites*? Original we cannot say it was, rightful it was, but not now; for GOD the sole rightful proprietor, and sovereign arbiter, had commanded them to be dispossessed, and extirpated. And it was perfectly agreeable to his own declarations, that *the rod* (that is, the sceptre, the dominion) *of the wicked should*

* *Urbem arduam situ opera molesq; firmaverant, quis vel plana satis munirentur. Nam duos colles immensum editos claudabant muri per artem obliqui --- extrema rupis abrupta, et turris ubi mons fuisset, &c.*

TACIT. *Hist.* l. 5.

the Life of King DAVID. 67

not rest upon the lot of the righteous, lest they also be infected by their abominable pollutions. Then follows a prayer, and a prediction; as for those who faithfully discharged the duty they owed to God, and to their country on this occasion, God would assuredly bless them: but as for those that swerved from it, (*those that decline in their doublings*, says the text) God would surely cast them out, together with those wicked wretches, whose interests they abetted; but his peace should be upon *Israel* his people.

I SHALL only add, that when *David* had sufficiently roused the spirits, and supported the confidence, of his people, he led them, (as we are well warranted by the text to conclude) in this height of their ardour and confidence, to *Jerusalem*; and summoned the *Jebusites* to surrender, according to the order expressly enjoined by the law of God *, *Deut. xx. 10, 11, &c.* They returned a contemptuous and insolent answer; that unless he could take away the lame and the blind, he should not come in thither. *David*, enraged at this answer, immediately com-

* An order so well known, that the sacred penman thought it not necessary to recount it on this occasion.

manded an assault; strictly injoining all those that reached the summit of the tower, to throw the lame and the blind into the ditch; and proclaiming at the same time, that whosoever should first gain that advantage, and should *smite the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind*, should be made captain general of his army. This prize had its desired effect; a general emulation was inspired; the city was quickly taken; and *Joab* had the felicity to be foremost, and was accordingly declared chief.

COMMENTATORS are mightily at a loss to know what can be meant by the *lame and the blind*, in the text; nor are their doubts ill-grounded; this text being incumbered with more difficulties than are ordinarily to be met with. Some understand the lame and the blind in the ordinary sense of the words; as if the *Jebusites*, confiding in the strength of their fortress, should insinuate, that the weakest of their people, the very lame and blind, were able to defend it against *David*. But then it is urged on the other hand, that these lame and blind are said to be *bated of David's soul*: and could a man of *David's* humanity detest men for mere unblame-

unblameable infirmities? Then again it is said, *Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind* — Now this connecting particle seems to speak the *Jebusites* as different from the lame and the blind, as the lame and the blind from one another. These difficulties have given rise to another opinion; that these *lame and blind* were the idols of the *Jebusites*; the statues of those heathen divinities, of which *David* hath said in derision, *eyes have they, and see not — feet have they, and walk not*: and therefore the *Jebusites* thus taunted *David* in return for his reproaches on their religion; confiding that these their divinities, however reviled by him, were yet able to protect them against him.

Now this construction thoroughly accounts for *David's* detestation of these lame and blind, seeing he abhorred idolatry: and accounts also for the phraseology of the text, in which they seem to be considered as beings different from the *Jebusites*.

THE superstition also of a heathen nation, not very remote from the *Jebusites*, seems to concur in confirming this interpretation. For why might not the *Jebusites* place as

70 *An Historical Account of*

much confidence in the statues of their GODS deposited in their citadel, as the *Trojans* did in the statue of *Pallas* deposited in theirs? And they, we know, persuaded themselves, that their city could not be taken, until that statue was removed.

BUT there is one difficulty still remaining, which is this; if we follow the reading in the margin of the bible, (which I take to be the true construction of the original text) then the reason why *David* commands the lame and the blind to be smitten, was, because they had said that *David* should not have admission into the place; now what lame and blind could say this, but men so mutilated?

To this I answer, that in my humble opinion, these expressions of lame and blind, when applied to the *Jebusites*, are to be figuratively understood, and not according to the letter; when *David* reviles the heathen idols, as being lame and blind, &c. he adds, *And they that make them are like unto them, and so are all they that put their trust in them.* It is plain then, that *David* considered these *Jebusites* in their idolatry to be as stupid and senseless as the idols they adored.

And

the Life of King DAVID. 71

And therefore, the reproaches of lame and blind were equally applied by *David* to both *.

Now, if this be the true explication of the passage before us, as some of the ablest critics and commentators warrant me to believe, then, I think, we can have no more room to doubt that the cxvth psalm was an *epinicion*, or triumphal song for this victory; it being plainly a hymn of humiliation and thanksgiving to GOD, for a victory gained over a heathen people, who put their confidence in their idols, and despised the GOD of *David* ‡.

AND however this hymn be adapted to the people of the *Jews*, by many peculiarities; yet it is remarkable, that it hath always been used as a hymn of thanksgiving for victories, by all princes of true piety, from the earliest

* Tho' after all, possibly there might have been some pretended oracle published among the people, as delivered by some of these idols, that they would protect the citadel against *David*.

‡ Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give the glory---Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?--But our God is in heaven.--Their idols are silver and gold, the work of mens hands---They have mouths, and speak not; eyes have they, and see not, &c. They that make them are like unto them; and so are all they that put their trust in them.

72 *An Historical Account of*
christian ages, and, very probably, from the
age of *David*.

C H A P. VII.

DAVID *inlarges Jerusalem. His Alliance with Hiram. He builds a Palace, and marries more Wives.*

DAVID now possessed of the strong fort of *Sion*, fixed his residence there, made it his capital, and called it after his own name, *The city of David*: and, in order to make it worthy of its name, he set himself, with all diligence, to build, to adorn, and to fortify it: and *David built round about* (says the text) *from Millo and inward*. This *Millo* is supposed to be a valley betwixt the two mountains on which *Jerusalem* was built, *Sion* to the north, and *Acra* to the south. The *Hebrew* word signifies *filled up*, and this valley was filled up, partly by *David*, and partly by *Solomon*. The meaning of the text then seems to be, that he fetched his compass from *Millo*, or, as the *Seventy* have it, from *Acra*; filled all that space with a city,

city, and joined it to the strong fort of *Sion*.

THIS is the sense of most commentators upon this passage. But I think it evident from the 32^d chapter of the i^{id} book of *Chronicles*, that they are mistaken in this comment. For it plainly appears from this chapter, that *Millo* was some tower, or fort, or place of strength of some kind: for when *Hezekiah* repaired all the breaches in the walls of *Jerusalem*, to strengthen the city against *Sennacherib*, we read, that he *repaired Millo* also, in the city of *David*; and made darts and shields in abundance. Now there could be no reason for mentioning the repair of this place on this occasion, if it had not been a place of strength. And from the account of his making darts and shields being immediately added to the account of his repairing *Millo*, it hath been conjectured to have been an armoury; and, that it was also a royal palace, appears from the 12th chapter of the second book of *Kings*, compared with the 24th chapter of the second book of *Chronicles*. And therefore it is rational to conclude, that it was at once a royal palace, and armoury, and a place of strength, as the tower of
of

74 *An Historical Account of*

of *London* was anciently. And, if I may be indulged in a conjecture upon the point, I imagine it was a strong fortress, consolidated for a considerable height from the foundation; and for that reason called *Millo*, or filled up. Nor is this conjecture without foundation; inasmuch as *Josephus* assures us, this was the manner of building many towers with which *Jerusalem* was fortified.

DAVID's affairs were now in a flourishing condition, and every day grew better and better; *he went on and grew great* (says the text). In the literal construction it is, *going and growing*; and the reason is annexed, *for the Lord God of hosts was with him*. As if *David's* condition had been described to us, under the image of a noble river, that swells and enlarges in its progress; continually receiving new accessions to its grandeur, altho', seemingly from the accidental influx of the next streams, yet, in reality, (tho' remotely) from the bounty of heaven.

WHAT the sacred historian adds soon after the account of *David's* grandeur, is very remarkable. *And David perceived, that the Lord had established him king over Israel,*

the Life of King DAVID. 75

Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake. Happy for mankind, were all kings blessed with this way of thinking; would they but learn from this wise and excellent king, (the great glory and honour of their order) that they are appointed to their sovereignty for the good of their people; that this is the great end of their appointment; the pursuit of this end, their great duty; and the attainment of it, their true glory! This is certain, — the great and the good kings of all ages have been in this way of thinking: let me be allowed to mention one; Plutarch tells us, that when the ephori summoned Agesilaus from Asia, he immediately obey'd; telling them, that he knew he held the supreme power, not for himself, but for his city, and companions in arms.

WHEN *David* had repaired and enlarged his city, as far as the present exigency of his affairs required, his next care was to adorn it: and to this, the friendship of *Hiram* king of *Tyre*, now seasonably offered to him, greatly contributed.

THE accounts left us of this king are but short; but yet, I think it evident from them,
that

76 *An Historical Account of*

that he was a magnificent, and a generous prince, and a believer * in the true GOD. And this character well fitted him to enter into, and to cultivate an alliance with *David*, as he did with uncommon friendship and affection, as long as *David* lived, (for *Hiram*, saith the text, *was ever a lover of David*) and continued it to his son for his sake.

THE *Israelites*, almost wholly addicted to agriculture, were little skilled in the arts of building : *Tyre*, lately raised to great wealth and magnificence, and now become a royal city, abounded with men experienced and knowing in all those arts ; with these *Hiram* abundantly furnished *David* ; and added moreover cedar trees, sufficient to build him a palace ; which from the best accounts left us of it, was erected in the midst of the new city ; nay, the letter of the text fully justifies this opinion. And *David* (saith the sacred writer) *dwelt in the fort, and called it, The city of David. And David built round about from Millo.* Is not the plain

* This I think appears from the form of his congratulation to *Solomon* upon his accession to the throne, 1 *Kings* v. 7. *Blessed be the Lord, &c.* In the original it is, *Blessed be Jehovah*---

meaning of these words, that he built round about the fort, the fort being in the centre, and *Millo* in the circumference? The *Septuagint* version is yet clearer, and more express, that he built his city in a circle; and there is no doubt, but that figure was best suited to its situation and circumstances; the city was round (the palace in the centre); one circular street (comprehending a great many others, and itself surrounded by the city wall) encompassed it; and all the rest shot out from the palace into this, like so many rays from the centre to the circumference: a figure the most beautiful, convenient, and comprehensive, that a city could possibly be built in. The city, we know, was built upon a hill, the king's palace upon the top, and in the centre; both in itself, and in its situation, higher than the other buildings: and if we consider the nature of the hills of *Judea* in general, and in particular this hill, we can have little doubt that all the strait streets ascended to the palace; and consequently the city walls were either on the brow, or on the declivity of the hill.

THIS situation, as it made the city more salutary, and kept it more clean, so it made
all

78 *An Historical Account of*

all attempts upon it from without, more difficult ; and all relief from within, more easy and expeditious.

ALL other parts of the kingdom were appropriated each to their several tribes ; this city only was common to all : so that this city was a centre of union to all the people of *Israel*, as the palace was to the city. And nothing surely could be a finer emblem of that union which should connect the people of every nation, not only to one another, but to their prince also ; making him the true centre of that union.

THIS prince was now the centre of union to his people, and GOD the centre of union to him and them. Nor was this long unsignified by a proper emblem, as shall be shewn hereafter.

WHEN *David* had finished his own palace, he soon after proceeded to build houses for his children also. It is expressly said, (1 Chron. xv. 1.) *That he built houses in the city of David* : and since we find in the sequel of his history, that his sons had their separate houses, the presumption is, that these houses were built for them. — He now began to grow very considerable ; and as his
grandeur.

the Life of King DAVID. 79

grandeur increased, so did that unhappy eastern appendage of it; for he now took more wives and concubines also. This too might have occasioned his building more houses; for it is more than probable, that he might find it convenient to keep some of those wives and concubines in separate habitations. It is probable, that each of them had a house separate from his, as *Sarah* had a tent separate from that of *Abraham* (*Gen.* xxiv. 67.).

AND here I must beg leave to observe upon *David's* polygamy, once for all, that it appears to me to have proceeded, in the first place, from an eager and a reasonable desire of issue; and in the next, from what might, in his circumstances, be deemed necessary policy: He had lived at least three years with *Michal*, without having had any child by her; and it is impossible to say, whether he would not have done so his whole life long, had she not been cruelly forced from him, and given to another. It will not, I believe, be much doubted, that he was then at liberty to marry again: and accordingly he married *Abinoam*; and having no child by her, he married *Abigail*.

HE

80 *An Historical Account of*

HE had both these wives with him, when he came to *Hebron*; but no child by either for at least five years. He well knew of what importance the increase of his family would be to his establishment upon the throne: it appears evidently (from 1 *Sam.* xxiv. 20.) that GOD had promised to establish him in the kingdom of *Israel*. Children were necessary to that end; and the most probable means for obtaining this advantage, was by taking more wives: and as these wives were well nigh as much interested in his establishment as himself, it is at least possible, (to say no more) that he took no subsequent wife, but with the consent of the precedent.

BUT supposing this not the case, we shall find, upon further inquiry, that GOD had promised to establish the kingdom not only in his own person, but also in his posterity: some such known promise as this could only be the ground of that express declaration of *Abigail's*, (1 *Sam.* xxv. 28.) *For the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house.* Polygamy was not then understood to be any way forbidden by Almighty GOD. GOD's promises must be fulfilled, and there was not
the

the Life of King DAVID. 81

the least reason to hope they should be fulfilled through any of the wives he had hitherto taken. At the same time policy required him to strengthen his unsettled state by new alliances; and how was this end so effectually to be attained, as by marrying into the families of greatest power and credit in his country, and out of it?

THIS was, in all human probability, the most effectual (apparently the only) means of making his *house sure*.

THIS consideration takes *David's* polygamy intirely out of the light of luxury and licentiousness, and places it in that of prudence, and, as some think, even of piety: but in this I cannot help differing from them. It may be the effect of a wise, but it must at the same time be owned too worldly an intention, to bring the purposes and promises of GOD in his favour, to a full and timely accomplishment.

THE sacred writer informs us, that he had six sons born to him in *Hebron*, and eleven in *Jerusalem*: Now, besides the security to his house from so numerous an issue, it is possible he might have proposed to himself many other advantages from it; among
G others,

82 *An Historical Account of*

others, an emulation of merit among his children, to intitle them to a preference in the father's esteem, upon the same principle, that *Philip* told *Alexander*, upon his complaining that his father had many sons by several women; *Therefore, since you have many rivals with you for the kingdom, take care to excel in virtue, and all valuable accomplishments, that you may not seem to have received the crown through my means, but your own merit.*

ONE objection indeed lies against him, upon this head; *viz.* his having married a strange woman, the daughter of *Tolmai* king of *Gesbur*, a practice prohibited to the *Jews*.

IT is true, there was a general prohibition to that purpose; yet such, however, as admitted many exceptions. A *Jew* might (under certain regulations) marry even a slave taken in war, (*Deut. xxi.*) and much more a proselyte to their religion; and *David* was justified in this practice, by the example of *Joseph*, *Moses*, and even his own ancestors*; and why might it not please God to give him issue by *Maacab*, as he gave *Boaz* issue by *Ruth*?

HAD

* *Salmon* and *Boaz*, *Ruth* iv. 20, 21.

HAD Mr. Bayle considered this, he had saved himself the trouble of a great deal of idle and ignorant censure upon this head; but then it must be owned, on the other hand, that he had lost a great deal of his darling pleasure of railing against *David*.

CHAP. VIII.

A Digression, containing a short Description and Account of Jerusalem.

AS *Jerusalem* became the metropolis of the kingdom under *David*, who adorned and fortified it, built a considerable part of it, and called it after his own name; I conceive it not foreign to the design of this history, to lay some account of it before the reader: previously informing him, that my purpose is not to give a long history, and laboured description, of that city, but barely to lay before him, as briefly and as clearly as I can, those particularities (little insisted upon by other writers) that distinguish it from all others; but at the same time far

84 *An Historical Account of*

from pretending that I can inform the reader in the true state of it, as it stood in the days of *David*.

VILLALPANDUS, who hath made more learned and accurate inquiries, concerning the situation, form and buildings of old *Jerusalem*, than all the other writers, I could ever see or hear of, put together, describes the city of *David* to be of a circular form, built upon a hill, surrounded with a broad and deep trench, hewn, whether by art or nature, out of the natural rock. The probability is, that the greater part of this trench was a natural hollow; and that the stones cut out for the buildings of the fortress, completed the trench; which was defended by a wall of great strength, erected upon its inner edge, and that also defended and adorned with strong and square towers, at regular distances. These towers are described to us, as built of white marble, the lowest sixty cubits* high, and the highest one hundred and twenty, all exactly of one level on the top, although in themselves of very different heights, according to the declivity of the ground on which they stood.

* *Tacitus* says, *Feet*.

the Life of King DAVID. 85

ON the centre and summit of this hill, (as the best writers agree) stood the king's palace, consisting (according to *Villalpandus's* description) of a large square court, defended by flankers, from one of which was the descent by stairs into his garden; which was disposed, as *Villalpandus* designs it, (and as the nature of the ground seems to imply) in some form not far removed from that of a quadrant; a figure as fair, and as well fitted for all the purposes of a pleasure-garden, as any I know. To this was afterwards added another garden, without the city of *David*, by another descent, (*Nehem. iii. 15.*) which was probably the work of some succeeding king.

BENEATH and around the city of *David*, lay the ancient city of *Jerusalem*, which mount *Sion* protected as a citadel, and crowned as a regal diadem.

THERE seem to have been four buildings of distinction in the city of *David*, besides the palace, and the royal sepulchres; and those were the tower of *David*, the tower of Furnaces, the house of the Mighty, and the high-priest's palace.

86 *An Historical Account of*

THE tower of *David* is said to have stood in one corner of the city; but forasmuch as the city was circular, (a figure which admits of no angles) it was doubtless built (as *William of Tyre* describes it) upon an angle of the rock, which projected beyond the city walls; which exactly answers to the situation assigned to his tower by the learned and classick Mr. *Sandys*, who tells us, that it stood aloft on the utmost angle of mount *Sion*; and hath left us a draught of its ruins, then extant; and adds, that it was of wonderful strength, and admirable beauty. Nor indeed can the strength of it be well doubted, if it were built, as *William of Tyre* tells us it was, of square stones, indissolubly cemented and knit together by lead and iron. And if that was the case, I think we may fairly infer, that this tower was a kind of citadel to *Sion*, as *Sion* was to *Jerusalem*.

THE beauty and fine proportion of this fabrick, as well as its use, may, I think, be also fairly inferred from that celebrated comparison of *Solomon's*, in the 4th chap. of the *Canticles*, at the 4th verse; *Thy neck is like the tower of David, builded for an armoury, whercon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields*

shields of mighty men. And doubtless some remains of this tower may be still extant, even consistently with *Josephus's* account of the demolition of all the fortifications of that city, except three towers. Nobody pretends that this was left undemolished, although probably not razed from the foundation; for as the strength of the city then lay round the temple, it is probable, that the total demolition which *Josephus* speaks of, refers only to the temple, and the fortifications on that side.

JOHN PHOCAS VENETUS speaks of a tower at *Jerusalem* in his time, which he styles a most mighty one, (Πύγες παργενήσεως) called by the inhabitants the tower of *David*, and conjectured by him to have been built upon the foundation of it. And *Rawolf* tells us, there is still within the *Turkish* fort there, a *strong high tower built up with great free-stone, which is quite black through age; wherefore* (adds he) *some say that it did anciently belong to the fort, and was built by one of the kings of Judah**. This seems to imply, that although the *Romans* demolished all the

* *Ray's Travels*, (2d edit.) vol. II. p. 230.

88 *An Historical Account of*

strength of the city, they did not totally raze all its ancient monuments; nor indeed does there seem to be any reason why they should, but rather the contrary.

THE next remarkable building of *Jerusalem*, and probably (but not certainly) in the city of *David*, was the tower of Furnaces; which *Adricomius* reports, from tradition, to have been a kind of *pharos*, or watch-tower, both to sea and land; and it is certain, that from the advantage of its situation it might thoroughly answer all the ends of a light-house both to the Mediterranean and Red Sea: and as it is probable from the name, that there were many fires lighted up in it at once, it was probably contrived to diffuse its lights over a considerable part of the city also; and must have been, in that respect, a glorious ornament, and of excellent use. Possibly too, it might have been intended as an emblem of that nobler light, which was to shine out from *Jerusalem*, and enlighten the World far and near.

THE house of the Mighty is thought to have been a palace erected by *David* in honour of his worthies or chieftains in war, in which they all had apartments assigned to them,

them, proportioned to their reputation and merit in arms; and were always ready at hand, for council or aid, as the king's affairs required; and in their hours of leisure, superintended and instructed the youth in their military exercises: and so answered all the purposes of a royal academy, for the science of war. A scheme for inspiring heroism, and diffusing military skill and prowess thro' a nation, perhaps beyond any that ever was known in the world!

AMONG these heroes of *David*, *Adino the Exznite* had the chief seat in all their assemblies (2 *Sam.* xxiii. 8.); nor is it any way improbable, that the first rank in that society, and first apartment in that palace, might be distinctions of as much honour amongst them, as the first titles of nobility amongst us. And it is confessedly a high point of political prudence, to make honorary, rather than pecuniary or profitable distinctions, the rewards of virtue, and the incitements to it.

THE next building of eminence in the old *Jerusalem*, was the high-priest's palace, generally supposed without the city of *David*; the extent of which may, in some measure, be estimated from the account we have of
the

the apportioning of the walls of *Jerusalem*, in the rebuilding, or rather repair of them, under *Nebemiah*, (ch. iii. 20, 21.) in these words: *Baruch, the son of Zabbai, earnestly repaired one piece of it, from the turning unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high-priest: and after him, repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz, the other piece (of the wall), from the door of the house of Eliashab, even to the end of the house of Eliashab.*

I AM unwilling to give all the offence that some of my readers may be too much inclined to take, by making the inferences which would obviously follow from this account: And therefore I shall only observe, that outward distinctions of state and dignity were not then deemed any way inconsistent with the characters of the true ministers of God. *Rich* and *blameless** were not then deemed epithets incompatible with the sacred name of *priest*; nor did *David* imagine, that they who were more immediately set apart

* Ἀγαθὸς ἀνδρῶν ἱερεὺς. *Homer. Iliad. 5.* And again speaking of *Hylaxor*, he calls him son of the valiant *Dolopion* priest of *Scamander*, who was honoured as a god by the people,

Priest of the stream, and honour'd as a god.

Ibid. Mr. Pope.
for

for the service of God, should be precluded from such a portion of those blessings which he pours out upon the earth, as would best enable them to imitate his beneficence.

THIS is a short account of old *Jerusalem* under *David*: But when the temple was afterwards erected upon mount *Moriab*, an eminence then perhaps equal to *Sion*; when *Millo* was added, and the house of the forest of *Lebanon**, and the palace of *Pharaoh's* daughter, and *Solomon's* own palace, which was thirteen years in building; then might the sacred writer well cry out, in transport †, *Let mount Sion, rejoice: let the daughters of Judah be glad. Walk about Sion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to them that come after.*

THE next thing remarkable of *Jerusalem* is its situation upon more than one eminence, surrounded by an amphitheatre of hills; a situation as salutary, and as delightful, as can well be imagined, in the centre of *Judea*,

* Supposing that (as some criticks do) a palace built in *Jerusalem*, which I believe it was not.

† Ps. xviii.

and,

92 *An Historical Account of*

and, what is very remarkable, and well worthy our most serious consideration, in the centre of the whole known world.

THIS is a circumstance which the sacred writers were well acquainted with, as appears sufficiently from the 5th chap. of *Ezekiel*, ver. 5. *Thus saith the Lord God, This is Jerusalem; I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries round about her.* And for what purpose he did this, is clearly illustrated from many other texts; thus in the 50th *Pf.* ver. 1, 2. *The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof: out of Sion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.* Here the Almighty kept his court; and from hence he sent out his ambassadors the prophets, to publish his decrees to the whole world around him, with more ease, and speedier conveyance, than could possibly have been done from any other region of the habitable world. And that this was the seat and fountain-head of true religion from the beginning, is evidenced beyond all doubt, from the history of the *Jewish* nation. This was the seat of *Melchisedec* the king and high-priest of the living God,

in

the Life of King DAVID. 93

in the days of *Abraham*; and how great his dignity was, and how eminently distinguished by that office, evidently appears from *Abraham's* acknowledging him his superior, and bending to him for a blessing, even when he was eminently the favourite of heaven, and in the height of his glory, just returned from the conquest of kings.

How long he continued in this most glorious of all earthly employments, a teacher and an example of true religion, (a shining light to the surrounding regions of the earth) is no-where said, or even suggested; but evidently long enough to make the sin of *Sodom* unpardonable, and, possibly, the sins of some succeeding generations in *Canaan*.

WHAT the state of *Jerusalem* was, from this time to the days of *David*, no-where appears; but this is certain, that from *David* to JESUS CHRIST, *God was known in her palaces as a sure refuge*. *Jerusalem* was (although with some interruptions) the chief, if not the sole source of true religion, to the whole habitable world around it. From hence, as from a central point, the light of the law first, and the gospel afterwards, shone out to the surrounding nations; and to this end,

94 *An Historical Account of*

end, this city was chosen, was eminently and emphatically *the chosen city of God, beautiful for situation, and the joy of the whole earth*; more especially, when *the Sun of righteousness rose up in it, with healing in his wings, the glory of his people Israel, and a light to lighten the Gentiles, till all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.*

C H A P. IX.

The Philistines and neighbouring Nations invade Israel, and are defeated in two Battles.

WHILST civil war subsisted in *Israel*, between the partizans of *David* and *Isbbosbeth*, the *Philistines* contented themselves with being calm spectators of their mutual ravages and conflicts, which naturally tended to their mutual destruction: but when all these were ended, in their unanimous election of *David* to the throne, and that election succeeded by all the happy beginnings

ginnings and omens of a prosperous reign, a powerful and inveterate enemy expelled from the heart of his kingdom, an impregnable fortress taken, and a royal city built and fortified, and crowned with a magnificent palace, and the alliance of a powerful neighbour prince offered unsought; they then began to be alarmed, and thought this the fit season to crush the growing power of this prince, before it rose to a greater height.

BUT it was natural for them to find upon inquiry, that they had now perhaps taken this resolution too late: *David* had now the most numerous and best disciplin'd militia upon the face of the earth; and such soldiers, fighting their own and their country's battles, under the command of such a captain, were sufficient to strike terror into the boldest of his enemies. The *Jews* had hitherto been too hard for the several nations of *Canaan*, that opposed them; they had exterminated some, and brought others under tribute; no single nation could stand against them, under the conduct of such a leader as *David*. The *Philistines* had too well experienced his prowess, to imagine themselves singly a match for him; and nothing but an union
of

96 *An Historical Account of*

of all the neighbour nations, could effectually oppress or destroy him.

THAT there was an universal confederacy against *Israel*, entered into by all the surrounding nations in the days of *David*, is undeniably evident from the lxxxiii^d *Psal.* if that was either written or set to musick by *Asaph*, as the title implies it to have been; and it is certain, it can suit no other time but this, throughout the whole series of the Old Testament history*. And that such a league as is referred to in that Psalm, was entered into

* I am sensible, that most commentators refer the lxxxiii^d *Psal.* to the days of *Jehoshaphat*; but for what reason, or what colour of reason, I own I can neither learn nor imagine. The enemies then assembled against *Jehoshaphat* are expressly said to be the *Ammonites*, *Moabites* and *Seirites*; and to have come from this side *Syria*, and passed the salt sea, quite out of the course of the *Philistine* invasions: besides that he himself, in his prayer to God, offered up in the greatest terror of his enemies, numbers up only the children of *Ammon*, *Moab* and *Mount Seir*: and we cannot doubt but that both his fears, and the occasion, called upon him to recount the whole number of his enemies: And when they destroyed one another, there is no mention of any other that was destroyed but those three nations. Add to all this, that the fear of the LORD is said to have fallen upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about *Judah*, (and consequently upon the *Arabians* and *Philistines* contiguous to it) so that they made no war against *Jehoshaphat*. And to crown all, these two nations are expressly said to have paid him tribute. Give me leave to add, that it is strangely improbable (not to say absurd) to imagine, that

the Life of King DAVID. 97

into at this time, appears with sufficient evidence from the cxviiith *Pfalm*, where *David* (whose *Pfalm* this is confessed to be) expressly declares, that *all nations compassed him about*; and it appears from the same *Pfalm*, that this compassing was before he had destroyed them; and therefore it was in the beginning of his reign.

THE same thing also appears from chap. vii. of 2 *Samuel*, v. 1. where it is expressly said, that the Lord had then *given him rest round about from all his enemies*.

ADD to all this, the testimony of *Josephus* upon the point; who affirms *, that the *Phœnicians*, *Syrians*, and several other nations, joined with the *Philistines* against *Israel* at this time. And the reason and nature of the thing vouches for his veracity; as it is most credible, that the attempt was made when it was most prudent and practicable; which was in the beginning of his reign, before his dominion was yet through-

that *Jehoshaphat* should in this *Pfalm* (lxxxiii.) pray to God for such a deliverance as he had wrought for his people by the hands of *Barak*, *Deborah* and *Gideon*, and forget or omit all those which he had wrought by the hands of *David* his father.

* *Antiq.* l. 7. c. 4.

ly established, and the wounds of a long civil war well healed. And that the express purpose of this league was to exterminate the whole race of *Israel*, is evident from the lxxxiii^d *Psalms* v. 3, 4. *They have imagined craftily against thy people, and taken counsel against thy secret ones; they have said, Come, and let us root them out, that they be no more a people, and that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.* Accordingly they assembled their whole force, and spread themselves abroad in the valley of *Rephaim* (a large and rich valley to the west of *Jerusalem*); no doubt to intimidate the *Israelites* with their numbers, as it was natural to hope they might. Armies so numerous were truly dreadful, especially when they were so well united, when *David* could say of them, as he does in the 'fore-cited *psalm*, *They have consulted together with one heart, they are confederate against thee; the tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites of Moab, and the Hagarenes, Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek, the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre**.

* There are two objections to this account: the first is, that the *Philistines* only are mentioned in the Bible to have warred

the Life of King DAVID. 99

THIS is plainly spoken in the spirit of a man who had all these several nations, their different encampments, tents and ensigns, then before him, all which (the *Syrians* only excepted) were long since familiar and well known to *David*: nor was it hard for him to distinguish them with great exactness, considering that their encampment was in a valley of considerable extent, contiguous to *Jerusalem*, from whose surrounding eminences he might see them to great advantage: which, as I before observed, seems to have been partly their purpose, upon the same

warred against *David* at this time; and the second, that the *Tyrians* are in this psalm mentioned among *David's* enemies, tho' *Hiram* their king was then at peace with him.

To the first, it is obvious to answer, that confederate armies are frequently denominated from the principal host: as in the late war, we called that the *French* army which opposed the confederates, tho' considerable bodies of *Bavarians*, *Irish*, *Swiss*, &c. helped to compose it. And I humbly apprehend, that the reason why the *Philistines* are not first mentioned in this Psalm, is, that the author recounts the several armies, in the order in which he beheld them ranged in their several encampments.

To the second I answer, that the king of *Tyre* might be in friendship with *David*, and the princes not: and it is well known, that the very merchants of *Tyre* were princes, (as well they might, when the wealth of the world was in their hands); as the *Philistine* king had lately been in friendship with *David*, and the lords not; or as the emperor might now be in friendship with *England*, and some of the *electors* not.

100 *An Historical Account of*

principle of conscious security, that made *Scipio* carry *Hannibal's* spies through every part of his camp, to intimidate his enemy with the true account of his number, order and discipline *.

UPON the enemy's approach to *Jerusalem*, *David* quitted it, and retired to the cave of *Adullam*†; with whose fastnesses, and various advantages of defence, he had long since been well acquainted. Here he continued (we cannot doubt) till his forces were gathered, in such numbers, and under such appointments and regulations, as he thought best for the occasion; but how long, is not told. From the situation the enemy was in, in a rich valley, the nearest granary of *Jeru-*

* The same thing is reported of *Xerxes*.

† Here he had all the advantages of a fortress without exposing either himself, or any of his cities, to the danger and inconveniencies of a siege.

It is objected, that *David* was not long after this in a condition to invade the *Philistines*: and then a question is asked, Is a man always in readiness to invade, and not to defend?

Answer, A man may be always in readiness to invade with a small number, and yet not in a condition to repel the invasion of a greater. When a man invades his enemies, he takes care to be most in a readiness, when they are least so. *David* might once in every month be in a condition to invade his enemies with forty-eight thousand men, and yet not in a condition of repelling a very numerous invasion every day of that month, with a body but of twenty-four thousand.

salem,

salem, and then covered with grain, about the beginning of the barley-harvest, it is probable he suffered them to continue there as little a time as he could.

WE only know, that one memorable event preceded the ensuing battle. *David*, oppressed with thirst, and probably exhausted with fatigue, expressed an eager wish for a draught of water from the well of *Bethlehem*. The *Philistines* were then garisoned in that town, and their host extended from thence to the further end of the valley of *Rephaim*; so that there is not the least appearance of *David's* having conceived the least possibility of obtaining his wish. However three of his chiefs, or of his thirty mighty men, combined to gratify it; broke thro' the *Philistine* host, and brought the water; they presented it to him; and he received it, with a most humane and religious horror, for the risque they had ran in fetching it. What they had thus purchased at so dreadful a hazard of their lives, which they thus resolved to sacrifice for his service, he looked upon as an offering of blood, sacred to God, and poured it out in sacrifice to him.—*My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing!—Shall I drink the*

blood of these men, that have put their lives in jeopardy? For with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it — Therefore he would not drink it.

THE humane and generous reader's heart will sufficiently suggest to him reflections suited to this great resolution : and to that I refer him.

WE cannot doubt of this adventure's having inspired the *Israelite* army with a happy omen of success ; and in consequence of that, an ardour for the engagement.

THERE were in *David's* army (as I before observed) three heroes of the first rank, three of the second, and thirty of the third. I humbly apprehend, that the three first were they who brought *David* the water of *Bethlehem* : for agreeably to this sense might that passage 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 13. be rendered, *The three captains over the thirty chief** : and at the close of the adventure of *Bethlehem* (1 *Chron.* xi. 19.) it is said *these things did these three mightiest* ; which I think plainly speaks them the three chiefs of the

* Some authors think, that the whole number was but thirty at first, and that they increased in proportion, as the prowess and heroism of the nation advanced ; but that however they still retained the name of the *thirty*.

first rank, in the judgment of the *English* translators.

WHEN the *Israelite* army was sufficiently prepared and animated for the engagement, *David*, who placed no confidence either in human prudence or prowess, (his sole dependence was on God) inquired of the Lord, by the high-priest, whether he should go up against the *Philistines*, and with what hopes of success; and being encouraged by God to go up, he immediately marched his forces against the confederate host.

CONSIDER the lxxxiii^d Psalm then, as a hymn to the God of hosts, composed and set to music, upon this occasion, and sung by the whole *Israelite* army in their march to the assault, and it needs no other comment. And in this light it is one of the noblest martial hymns that ever was composed; and the best fitted to inspire a calm, and, what is the truest and steadiest of all others, a religious fortitude.

THE beginning of this Psalm always puts me in mind of that most lively and spirited description of the *Trojan* and *Greek* armies going to battle, in the 3^d book of the *Iliad*;

104 *An Historical Account of*

the *Trojans* marching with noise and tumult, and the *Greeks* in a still silence; keeping back their swelling ardour, and confining it with difficulty to their own heaving bosoms.

DAVID here considers GOD on the one side, and the confederate enemies on the other; the confederates loud in threats and tumult, and GOD with difficulty keeping silence*. *David* well knew, that one word from the mouth of GOD, was sufficient to blast and confound his enemies†; and therefore he begins this Psalm with beseeching him to keep silence no longer.—*Hold not thy tongue, O God—keep not still silence—refrain not thyself, O God—for, lo, thine enemies make a tumult, and they that hate thee, have lift up the head.*

AND now it was, in all probability, that the three worthies above-mentioned challenged ‡ the whole adverse army (it may be presumed, in the same manner *Goliath* had done that of *Israel* before) to send out three

* *Psalm lxxxiii. 1. Refrain not thyself, O God---*

† *Psalm xvi. 6. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved, he uttered his voice, the earth melted.*

‡ *2 Sam. xxiii. 9.*

champions

champions to contend with them in combat; which they (probably confiding in their numbers) seem to have declined, inasmuch as we hear no more of the matter, than that the defiance was given.

WHEN the onset was made, the *Israelite* army, whether terrified, or oppressed by numbers, gave way; and *David* and his three worthies of the first order were left alone in the midst of the enemy*. *David* was now, in all human appearance, utterly lost: but now was the time for GOD to interpose in his favour, when all human appearances failed. GOD had promised to deliver his enemies into his hands; and *David* well knew, it was equally in the hand of omnipotence, to effect this by a few, as by an infinite number. And to support him in this assurance, he was well acquainted with the promise of GOD to his people, *Deut.* xxxii. 30. that if they were obedient, *one should chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to*

* 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 9. 1 *Chron.* xi. 13. It is not clear whether this flight of the *Israelites* was in this battle with the *Philistines*, or some other. But many circumstances have inclined me to believe it was in this. When the reader has well weighed the text referred to, he will judge for himself; always remembering, that be the battle which or when it will, *David's* prowess was equally distinguished; and the praise of it the same.

flight.

flight. He could not but reflect, that he was now at the head of those three brave men, who had so lately broken thro' the whole *Philistine* host, to relieve his thirst: would they exert themselves less to save his life? Animated by those assurances, *David* rushed in upon his enemies, with such a force and fury as was not to be resisted; and was so well seconded by his three brave companions, that they put the whole adverse army into confusion; which the *Israelites* perceiving, returned rather to the rout † than the combat: nor let any man think this strange, who remembers the exploit before related in the case of *Jonathan* and his armour-bearer, 1 *Sam.* xiv.

THAT *David* considered GOD as the great agent in this case, and himself only as a secondary instrument, appears evidently from 1 *Chron.* xiv. 11. *Then David said, God hath broken in upon mine enemies by mine hand, like the breaking of waters*. Or, as it is, 2 *Sam.* v. 20. *The Lord hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters*; or rather, as it should be translated, GOD hath broken or divided mine enemies,

† 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 10.

as waters are broken ; that is, as a storm breaks and divides a flood : *therefore he called the place Baal-perazim*, or the plain of breaches.

THIS allusion, in my humble opinion, contains as fine an image, perhaps a finer than any in *Homer*. It is familiar with *David* to consider an host of enemies as a great flood, or sea, ready to break in and overwhelm him with its waves. Thus, Psalm xviii. 4. *The sorrows of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.* lxxxviii. 17. *They came round about me like water, and compassed me together on every side.* xciii. 3. *The floods are risen, O Lord ; the floods have lift up their voice, the floods have lift up their waves.*

Now an army coming up in one vast body, broken in upon by a brave enemy, as by a tempest, put to flight, and in their flight scattered into a great many broken parties, is finely compared to a vast flood or body of water broken and dispersed into many streams*. And now, perhaps, the cxxivth

* *David* was not improbably led into this train of thinking, by that promise of God to his people, *Deut.* xxviii. 7. *They (thine enemies) shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.*

108 *An Historical Account of*

Psalms was first sung, as a hymn of thanksgiving, for the deliverance of *Israel* from a combination of the neighbour nations against them.—*If the Lord had not been on our side, now may Israel say, if it had not been the Lord, who was on our side—they had swallowed us up quick, the waters had overwhelmed us* *, &c.

I WILL not now take upon me to say, that *Homer* is indebted to *David* for many of the finest images in his works; but the learned reader will easily see, from an attentive observance of that passage, *The Lord hath broken mine enemies before me*, whom *Homer* copies after, when he represents the gods preceding their favourite heroes in battle, and mowing down the hostile ranks before them.

THAT the history of this battle was written under the direction of *David's* modesty and humility, guided by the Spirit of God, appears evidently from hence; that the exploits of his companions on this occasion are

* The relation between this hymn and the preceding account of *David's* crying out, *The Lord hath broken mine enemies by my hand, as waters are broken*, is, I think, sufficiently evident.

very

the Life of King DAVID. 109

very exactly related, and the numbers slain by them carefully set down (and immense they were) 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 1 *Chron.* xi. without the least mention of one man slain by him : tho' it appears plainly from the forecited passages, (1 *Chron.* xiv. 11. 2 *Sam.* v. 20.) that he led and opened the way, in the onset.

THE ingenious reader will, I believe, agree with me, that the heroism of such humility is infinitely superior to all the exploits of prowess.

WHAT number of the hostile forces fell in this battle, is no-where said : we are only told in one place, (2 *Sam.* xxiii. 12.) in the usual piety and simplicity of the scripture style, *That the Lord wrought a great victory;* and in another, (1 *Chron.* xi. 14.) *That the Lord saved by a great deliverance.*

IN all appearance, the defeat was not very destructive to the enemy ; inasmuch as we find them soon after returning to the war, possibly in the very same year. However, that the rout was precipitate, and total, appears evidently from hence ; that when they fled, they left their gods behind them. And *Da-*
vid

vid and his men destroyed them with fire, as the law directed.

THE relation of this battle is no sooner ended, than the sacred historians recount another *Philistine* inroad : *The Philistines came up yet again, (say the sacred historians) and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.*

DAVID was as regular in his returns to GOD, as his enemies in their inroads upon him. He immediately inquired of GOD, with his usual piety and humility, how to conduct himself on the occasion ; and was directed, not to advance to the engagement with an open front, as before, but to fetch a compass, and come secretly behind them, over-against a certain mulberry-grove, which I apprehend stood at the rear of the enemy's camp ; and when he heard a sound of going on the tops of the mulberry-trees, (probably the sound of a mighty host rushing to battle) then was he to pour upon his enemies with all his force : for that was the signal of GOD's going out before him, to destroy and defeat them.

DAVID obeyed the divine monition, and put the whole host to the rout : which, we may conceive, was easily done, when they
were

the Life of King DAVID. III

were surpris'd with more than all the terrors of a mighty hostile army in their rear; which they might easily imagine to be another, more numerous, and more formidable, than that of *David's*.

DAVID made the best advantage of this confusion and consternation; ply'd them hard, and had the slaughter of them from *Geba* to *Gazar*, a levitical city of *Ephraim*, upon the *Philistine* confines; a length of at least twenty miles.

I THINK it evident to a demonstration, that the lxxvith *Psalms* was written upon this occasion, although not by *David*: and as it is tinctured with mirth and wit*, (not without a spirit of true piety) it is not unnatural to imagine, that it now became a favourite song with the people.

AND now also, as I conceive, was compos'd the cxviiith *Psalms*; and sung in the tabernacle, as an *epinicion*, or hymn of thanksgiving to GOD for this victory. It be-

* This criticism will, I believe, be justified to the candid reader, when he considers the 5th and 6th verses of this *Psalms*: ver. 5. *The stout-hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep, and the men of might have not all found their hands.* Ver. 6. *At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.*

112 *An Historical Account of*

gins thus, *O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is gracious: because his mercy endureth for ever.* And then goes on with such a flow of gratitude to God, such expressions of trust and confidence in him, and glory to him; and adds to all this, such descriptions of his enemies, in such a variety of lights and images, as are the peculiar distinction of *David's* genius.

NOTHING is more common with *Homer*, than to describe an army under the image of a flood of waters, wave impelling wave*; but I don't remember he has any-where painted the defeat and rout of an army, under the image of a flood of waters, broken and dispersed by a storm.

My purpose is not to institute any comparison between these writers, in this point; but barely to observe to the philological

* I might mention many instances from the *Iliad*: but the reader will, I believe, be content with one, B. 4. v. 473. Mr. *Pope's* translation:

As when the winds, ascending by degrees,
First move the whit'ning surface of the seas,
The billows float in order to the shore,
The wave behind rolls on the wave before;
'Till with the growing storm the deeps arise,
Foam o'er the rocks, and thunder to the skies:
So to the fight the thick battalions throng, &c.

reader,

the Life of King DAVID. 113

reader, once for all, that it is familiar with *David*, to couch such images in three words, as would, in the hands of *Homer*, be the materials of his noblest, most enlarged, and most dignified descriptions.

I SHALL mention two in this *Psalms*, and leave the application to the reader's breast.

VER. 12.

THEY (that is, all nations) *compassed me about like bees* —

THEY *are quenched as the fire of thorns**.

THE reader has here, in miniature, two of the finest images in *Homer*: which, if his curiosity demands to be gratified, he will find illustrated and enlarged in the 2^d book of the *Iliad*. The first of them stands thus transcribed from Mr. *Pope's* translation:

———— *The following host*
Pour'd forth in millions, darken all the coast.
As from some rocky cleft, the shepherd sees
Clust'ring in heaps on heaps, the driving bees;
Rolling and black'ning, swarms succeeding swarms;
With deeper murmurs, and more hoarse alarms:
Dusky they spread, a close embody'd croud;
And o'er the vale descends the living cloud:
So from the tents and ships, &c. V. 209, &c.

* The reader will please to observe, that these images are by a notorious blunder in the translator of the reading *Psalms*, connected as if they were but one.

114 *An Historical Account of*

THE next is in the same book, V. 534, &c.

*As on some mountain, thro' the lofty grove,
The crackling flames ascend, and blaze above;
The fires expanding, as the winds arise,
Shoot their long beams, and kindle half the skies:
So from the polish'd arms, and brazen shields,
A gleamy splendor flash'd along the fields.
Not less their number, &c.*

THE candid reader will observe, that here the idea of an army's resembling a flaming fire, is common both to *Homer* and *David*: but the idea of that fire being quenched (when the army was conquered) is peculiar to *David*.

CHAP. X.

DAVID *attempts to remove the Ark to Sion: and at last succeeds.*

WHAT the consequences of these two total defeats of the *Philistine* confederates were, is no-where explicitly related in scripture; more than this, that *the same of David went out into all lands, and the*
Lord

the Life of King DAVID. 115

Lord brought the fear of him upon all nations. The great victories which GOD had given him, by so signal an interposition in his favour, naturally tended to strike a terror of him into all the nations, far and near : and it is reasonable to believe, that the first effect of it was, the flight of the *Philistines* from those *Israelite* cities, which they had seized, upon the death of *Saul*: and that the *Israelites* gained at least as much by these conquests, as they lost by the defeat of *Gilboa*. For we find soon after, that *David was at rest from all his enemies round about*; and it is not *natural* to believe, that he could be at rest, before he had recovered all those *Israelite* cities, which the *Philistines* had possessed themselves of, after that defeat.

WE learn from the xiiith chapter of the first book of *Chronicles*, that as soon as *David* was in quiet possession of the fort of *Sion*, the first consultation he held with the representatives of his people, was, about removing the *ark* from *Kirjath-jearim* to *Sion*. *David* well understood, of what infinite importance it was, to have an authentick symbol, and sure pledge, of the divine presence, deposited in his capital, to which to have solemn

and public recourse, upon all emergencies, and great occasions.

SAUL was not blessed with this right way of thinking, which the people well knew. However, *David*, in his exhortation to them on this occasion, guards against all censure of that prince; and only puts them in mind, that they had not, for some time past, been so solicitous as they ought, to secure to themselves this blessing: *For* (says he) *we inquired not at it in the days of Saul*, as if the guilt of that omission were rather to be placed to their own account.

THE assembly agreed to the proposal, with one consent; and when GOD, upon an humble application made to him by the high priest, concurred with them, a resolution was taken, to summon all the *priests* and *Levites*, and principal men of the whole nation, to attend the solemnity, at a time appointed. And the nature and reason of the thing incline me to believe, with the very learned primate *Usher*, that it was on the ensuing sabbatical year.

So much was *David's* heart set upon this point, that it appears from the 132^d *Psalms*, that upon the taking of *Sion*, he had made a
fo-

the Life of King DAVID. 117

solemn vow to GOD, not to take so much as one night's rest, nay not so much as to put his foot within his doors, 'till he had fixed upon a proper place, on which to deposit the tabernacle of GOD.

THE providence of GOD had no sooner settled him in his kingdom, than he took a solemn resolution of settling the service of GOD in it; well knowing, that purity and sincerity in his worship was the best and only sure stay of his own power, and his people's prosperity. A resolution truly wise! and worthy the father of that blessed Redeemer (according to the flesh) who commanded in his gospel, *Seek ye first the kingdom of GOD, and his righteousness, and all these (inferior, earthly) things shall be added unto you:* and accordingly, this, as I now observed, was the principal and express purpose of the first convention of his people, to remove and settle the *ark* at *Sion*; and with that the worship of GOD, in all its solemnity.

BUT before the time appointed for this purpose arrived, the *Philistines*, and neighbour nations, made the confederacy and incursions related in the last chapter.

118 *An Historical Account of*

As soon as these were over, *David*, in pursuance of the resolution before agreed to with his people, again summoned all *Israel*, the princes and rulers of the people, with the *priests* and *Levites*, from *Sibor* of *Egypt* to *Hemath*, that is, from the *Nile* to the fountains of *Jordan*, to attend this great solemnity : And from this summons, we may occasionally conclude, that all this tract of country was now in the possession of *Israel*.

ACCORDINGLY the high-priest, chief priests, princes, rulers, and leaders of every tribe, in a word, the nobility, clergy, and magistracy of the whole kingdom, assembled in one body, to the number of thirty thousand men : and *David* attended by the nobility * of *Judah*, marched at their head, to bring up the *ark* from *Kirjath-jearim* ; that *ark*, which was peculiarly distinguished and dignified, by the name of the *ark of God*, whose name is called by the name of the *Lord of hosts*, that dwelleth between the *cherubims*.

THIS, I think, may fairly be considered, as the noblest assembly that was ever con-

* So the text should be rendered, 2 Sam. vi. 2. The vulgate says, *The men of Judah*.

vened,

vened, and met together, in any nation : and we shall form some notion of it, if we suppose the king of *Great Britain*, at the head of the whole nobility of the realm, all the archbishops, bishops, deans, and chapters of the church, all the choirs of all the cathedrals of his dominions, doubled ; all the judges, benchers, and sergeants of the law, all the representatives of the people in parliament, all the civil magistracy of the kingdom, and all the officers of the militia, fleet, and army, with all the ensigns, and ornaments of their several orders, and professions, regularly assembled, and formed into one solemn procession.

WHEN they arrived at *Kirjath-jearim*, they placed the *ark* of GOD upon a new cart ; and brought it forth from the house of *Abinadab*, from the eminence on which it had been deposited, and on which it had now rested about ninety years (according to the chronology of the bible) : and *Uzzab* and *Abio*, the sons of *Abinadab*, drive the cart ; the king attending upon it, with his harp in his hand. *And David* (says the text) *and all the house of Israel played before the Lord, with all their might, on all manner of instruments made of fir-wood, and*

120 *An Historical Account of*

with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cornets, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.

THUS they proceeded for a considerable space; but their festivity was, after some time, sadly interrupted. For, when they came to *Nachen's* threshing floor, the oxen, now possibly an hungred, and smelling their wonted food, seem to have grown unruly. Thus much is certain, they shook the *ark*. *And Uzzah* (says the text) *put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it.*

THE action was well intended, but it was an action strictly prohibited by God, upon pain of death, and accordingly punished as it deserved. *And the anger of the Lord* (says the text) *was kindled against Uzzah, and God smote him there, for his error; and there he died, by the ark of God.* He erred, but it was from a gross neglect of inquiring into his duty; his error was vincible, and therefore punished as voluntary.

THE *rabbins* tell us, that the death inflicted upon *Uzzah* was, by tearing off the rash arm, which he had extended to the *ark*; which, if the muscles were torn away with it,

it, must necessarily make an opening, that is, a *breach*, into the cavity of his body. This account they probably derive from some tradition; which, however, is not ill supported by the text; which tells us, that *David was displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah*: in memory of which, he called the name of the place *Perez-Uzzah*, that is, *The breach of Uzzah, unto this day*. And it is a fair presumption, or rather, a fair inference, that the name was conferred with strict propriety to the occasion.

I OWN it is matter of astonishment to me, how *David*, and all the priests and people, could fall into so great an error, and deviate so strangely from the plain precepts of the law of GOD in this point; which expressly prohibited any, but the priests, to touch the *ark*, upon pain of death, (*Numb. iv. 5, 15.*) and any but the *Levites* to carry it*. The best apology that can be made for them, is, that *David* now succeeded to the throne after a long irreligious reign; in which the *ark*, and every thing relating to it, were utterly neglected; especially after the massacre

* To carry even any part of the tabernacle, *Numb. i. 51.*

122 *An Historical Account of*

of all those priests, whose peculiar business it was to attend the tabernacle (all but one young man); and who were, in all probability, the only priests of that realm, that had ever seen it, or knew any thing of its rituals: and there was not then (probably) any one priest or *Levite* alive, who had ever seen it removed. In short, the publick worship of God had long been discouraged and neglected in *Israel*; and with that, the study of the Scriptures, except so much, as was absolutely necessary for the administration of the civil affairs of the state. (Would to God *Israel* were the only nation, upon which this sad truth could at any time be pronounced!)

ADD to all this, that *David* and his people had now been for many years immersed in wars; and the voice of religion, as well as reason, is often drowned in the din of arms.

IT is true, the *Philistines* had, about ninety years before, removed the *ark* with impunity, (1 *Sam.* vi. 7.) in the same manner as the *Israelites* did now: but they forgot, that what was pardonable in a *Philistine*, who knew no better, might be highly criminal in an *Israelite*. And surely there cannot be a stronger instance of the proneness of *Israel* to

the Life of King DAVID. 123

to imitate the manners of their neighbours, in every thing relating to religion, than this profane imitation of the practice of the *Philistines*, in neglect of the express precepts of their duty. And, as all veneration of that sacred repository of the commands of GOD had long been lost and forgotten among the people, nothing less than so signal a judgment from heaven, upon the profanation of it, was sufficient to recover a proper reverence of it in their hearts.

THE signal vengeance of GOD, upon the profane temerity of *Uzzah* on this occasion, struck *David* and his people into a strange consternation; and the king was in terror what to do, or how to conduct himself, how to carry the *ark* to his own house in the city of *David*. In this fear, he resolved to defer the further removal of it, till he was some way or other better informed; and in the mean time deposited it in the house of *Obededom* the *Gittite*, a *Levite* of *Gath-rimmon* a *Levitical* city in the tribe of *Dan*, *Josh.* xxi. 23, 24.

HERE it continued three months; during which time, it pleased GOD to bless *Obededom*, and all his household, and all that pertained

tained to him, in a remarkable manner ; but how, or in what particulars, is not said, nor shall I take upon me to conjecture.

THIS signal prosperity of *Obed-edom*, since his reception of the *ark*, being reported to *David*, he again summoned the chiefs of the kingdom, in order to remove it to his own palace in *Sion* ; and in the mean time, took care to inform himself particularly, from the law of GOD, how and in what manner it ought to be removed. There he learnt*, that the priests only were to approach it, upon pain of death ; and to lay on its three coverings in a regular order ; first *the covering veil*, secondly *the covering of badgers skins*, and thirdly, over that, *a cloth wholly of blue* ; and when they had done this, and put in the staves thereof, then the sons of *Kobath* might approach to bear it : but (says the text) *they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die*.

WHEN the priests and *Levites* were thoroughly instructed in all the parts and circumstances of their duty, and distinguished into their several classes and offices, *David* then composed the xxivth psalm, set it to musick,

* *Numb. iv.*

and gave it, with all its parts, vocal and instrumental, to *Cheneniab* chief of the *Levites*, his master of the song; who was to instruct the several performers in their parts, vocal and instrumental.

THE instruments mentioned in the sacred text, to be made use of on this occasion, are psalteries, harps, cymbals, cymbals of brass, psalteries on *alamoth*, harps on the *shaninith*, cornets, and *trumpets*.

THEN *David* prepared robes of fine linen, as it is translated, but in reality of *byssus*, that is, fine white rich silk, for all the *Levites* that attended the *ark*, to the number of eight hundred and sixty-two; and when they were all properly prepared and sanctified (as he expressly enjoined they should) for that sacred office, he then put off his royal robes, and assuming the character of an humble attendant on the *ark* of GOD, he put on a long robe of the same kind with those worn by the *Levites*, and over that a linen ephod, which, according to the best criticks, was a short vesture or tunick, (without sleeves) reaching down below the middle of the thigh, and open on the sides, like a rochet, with a long girdle annexed, hanging
from

126 *An Historical Account of*

from behind the neck, (not unlike an officer's sash) then crossing the body beneath the breasts, and returned round the loins, then closely tied before, and both the ends of it hanging down as low as the long robe *.

WHEN the *ark* was lifted up, *David*, in this dress, led the procession; the order of which is thus far set forth, *Psalms* lxxviii. 25, &c. *The singers went before, (David at their head) the players upon instruments after; in the midst, (that is, between both) the damsels, playing with timbrels.* Then followed (as I humbly apprehend) the several congregations, that is, the several tribes, with their princes, elders, &c. for this I take to be the meaning of that expression, (verse 27.) *the princes of Judah, and their council, &c.*

* I am sensible, that some very superficial and conceited men have blundered egregiously upon this head, confounding the girdle and the *ephod*, as if the *ephod* were nothing but a girdle; whereas there are no two things in the sacred writings (nor in any writings under heaven) more clearly distinguished than the *ephod* and the girdle. Thus, *Exod.* xxviii. 4, 6, 8. *These are the garments which they shall make, a breast-plate, and an ephod, &c. and a girdle, &c. and they shall make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, &c. and the curious girdle of the ephod, which is upon it, shall be of the same, &c.* And the same distinction is again repeated, *Exod.* xxxix. 2, &c.

WHEN

the Life of King DAVID. 127

WHEN *David* found, upon the *ark's* being carried a few (six) paces, that the work prospered in their hands, *when God* (says the text) *helped the Levites which bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, they sacrificed seven bullocks, and seven rams.* Some have imagined from this text, that *David* had erected altars at this interval, throughout the whole length of the procession; an opinion, as I humbly apprehend, not sufficiently founded in the text: though the distribution of flesh at the close of the solemnity, demonstrates that an infinity of sacrifices was made upon this occasion.

DAVID's joy increased, as the procession happily went on: GOD had filled his heart with gladness, and he was not ashamed to shew it, in all the genuine effects and expressions of transport; singing, and shouting, and leaping, and dancing before the LORD, according as the various measures of the musick inspired and directed, till he arrived at the tabernacle, and fixed the *ark* in its place.

LET the xxivth *Psalms* be considered, as compos'd and set to musick upon this occasion, and sung in the procession (as almost
all

128 *An Historical Account of*

all commentators agree it was, and the tenor of the psalm manifests it to have been). It is undoubtedly written in the way of dialogue, and must as undoubtedly have been sung in the same manner. Let *Jerusalem* then, the city of GOD, be considered as an emblem of heaven (as undoubtedly it was by the *Jews*); the court of the tabernacle, the region of GOD's more immediate residence; the tabernacle, his palace; and the *ark*, his throne: let this be considered, and the most ordinary and inattentive reader cannot fail to be struck with the beauty and sublimity of the composition, and its propriety to the occasion.

LET the king be supposed to begin the concert, with a solemn and sonorous recitative of these sentences.

K I N G.

*The earth is the Lord's, and all that there
in is! the compass of the world, and
they that dwell therein.*

LET the chorus of vocal musick then take up the song, and sing the same words, in a more tuneful and elaborate harmony; then let all the instruments, and whole chorus of
the

the Life of King DAVID. 129

the people fall in with them. And indeed there is reason to believe from the text, that the whole body of the people that made up the proceſſion, were inſtructed upon this occaſion: *And David* (ſays the text) *and all Iſrael with him, played upon all manner of inſtruments, &c.*

LET the chorus be then divided, each ſinging in their turns, (and both joining in the cloſe) *For he hath founded it upon the ſeas, and prepared it upon the floods.*

LET this part of the muſick be ſuppoſed to have laſted till the proceſſion reached the foot of the hill of *Sion*, or near it; then let the king be preſumed to have ſtept forth, and begun again, in a ſweet and ſolemn tone:

K I N G.

*Who ſhall aſcend into the hill of the Lord?
And who ſhall riſe up in his holy place?*

S I N G E R S, 1^ſt C H O R U S.

Even he that hath clean hands, and a pure heart

2^d C H O R U S

*That hath not liſt up his mind unto vanity,
nor ſworn to deceive his neighbour, &c.*

VOL. II.

K

LET

130 *An Historical Account of*

LET this part of the musick be supposed to have lasted till they reached the gates of the city.

THEN the king began again, in that most sublime and heavenly strain---

K I N G.

Lift up your heads, ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

A L L.

Lift up your heads, ye gates, &c.

PERSONS appointed to keep the gates*.

Who is the King of glory?

1st CHORUS.

It is the Lord strong and mighty, even the Lord mighty in battle.

2^d CHORUS.

It is the Lord strong and mighty, &c.

A L L.

He is the King of glory; he is the King of glory.

* Or perhaps the matrons of *Jerusalem* meeting him there, as they did *Saul* upon his return from the *Philistine* conquest, 1 *Sam.* xviii.

AND

the Life of King DAVID. 131

AND now let us suppose the instruments to take up the same airs, (the king, the princes, and the matrons, moving to the measure) and continue them to the gates of the court of the tabernacle.

THEN let the king again begin :

K I N G.

Lift up your heads, ye gates, &c.

AND be followed and answered as before.

ALL closing — instruments sounding,
chorus singing, people shouting,

He is the King of glory.

How others may think upon the point, I cannot say (nor pretend to prescribe); but for my own part, I have no notion of hearing, or of any man's ever having seen or heard, any thing so great, so solemn, so celestial, on this side the gates of heaven *.

* Need I caution the reader, that I say this neither of the Jewish ritual, nor any ceremonial of the law, but merely of this particular procession and form of devotion, celebrated in the circumstances now related?

CHAP. XI.

The Conclusion of the Procession of the Ark. Mr. Bayle's Censure of DAVID's Dancing and Dress, considered.

BEING now come to the close of this procession, give me leave to add, before I proceed further, that this procession was not (as some commentators have strangely mistaken it) in any-wise military, but entirely and securely pacifick; and is indeed a fine comment upon *David's* intire reliance and implicit confidence in the protection of almighty God, grounded upon that repeated command to his people, that all their males should appear thrice every year before the LORD, in the place that he should chuse, and that amazing promise annexed, that no man should invade their land, or assault their cities, when they were so deserted of their defenders: Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year (Exod. xxxiv. 24.)

IF

the Life of King DAVID. 133

IF it be objected, that *David* had just subdued his enemies, and therefore might now be secure of not being assaulted by them :

I ANSWER, that the resolution of making this procession was taken in a general assembly of his people, before he had subdued, or even warred with them, (1 *Chron.* xiii.) and very soon after he had provoked them, by taking the strong fort of *Sion*; so that if they had waited but a few weeks, they might have invaded him in the very time of this procession, when it was easy for them, with their multitudes, to have stormed an hundred of his cities in one day, or rather possessed themselves of them without resistance: but God's unconquerable promise stood in the way; nor is there one instance of any attempt made upon the people of God, by any one of their enemies, in this annual desertion of their cities, from the earliest æra of their history. And doubtless this was one reason why the sacred historians are so very express and particular in relating all the circumstances of this procession, which demonstrated it to be wholly pacifick, and which for that reason, fills up more space in the sacred page, than

the descriptions of many battles, and the defeats of mighty enemies.

I REMEMBER but two religious processions of note, in the accounts of the Heathen world; neither of which, however, in my humble opinion, deserves to be once mentioned with this. The first is, that of *Alcibiades**, in which he conducted and protected the priests, in the celebration of the great mysteries in honour of *Minerva*; but by no means in the manner that *David* conducted his procession, but quite otherwise, in a most magnificent military apparatus; which gained him as much reputation, and more esteem, than any of his military achievements. And the next is, a procession of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, in honour of *Bacchus*, particularly described by *Athenæus*, (l. 5.) in which *Satyrs* and *Sileni*, that is, lewdness and drunkenness, and other abominable emblems, richly and pompously arrayed, and crowned in all the splendor and magnificence of monarchs, made up the principal and most distinguished part of the pomp. In one word, it were hard to determine, which was most predominant in that procession, the folly, the extravagance,

* See *Plutarch's* Life of *Alcibiades*.

the vain vaunt of wealth, or the ostentatious and impious embellishments and triumph of vice.

BUT to return :

WHEN the *ark* of GOD was deposited in its place, *David* and his people offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before GOD; but of what kind, and in what numbers, is no-where said; but if we may guess from the subsequent practice of *Solomon*, upon the removal of the *ark* into the temple, in which, as I apprehend, he transcribed pretty nearly the example of his father, the sacrifices must have been very numerous, and of the most valuable kinds.

AFTER the sacrifices followed the Psalm, recited at length 1 *Chron.* xvi. expressly said to be on that day first delivered to *Asaph* and his brethren, to thank the Lord: and that it was sung also upon that occasion, appears evidently from these concluding words, *And all the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord.*

IN this Psalm, after *David* hath exhorted the people to praise and to give thanks to GOD, for his peculiar mercies to them there recited, he then breaks out into a rapture of

136 *An Historical Account of*

gratitude, in contemplation of the infinite bounty and benignity of the Creator, and calls upon the whole creation, to fill up the chorus of his praise: ---- *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.--Bring an offering, and come before him.--Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.---Fear before him, all the earth.---The world also shall be stable, that it be not moved.---Let the heaven be glad, and the earth rejoice; and let men say among the nations, The Lord reigneth.--- Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. --- Let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein: then shall the trees of the wood sing out in the presence of the Lord, because he cometh to judge the earth.*

HE then returns to his own people: --- *O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.---And concludes with those words, which I humbly apprehend to be the form in which he blessed, that is, prayed for his people (first calling upon them to join with him in the prayer); And say ye --- Save us, O Lord our Salvation, and gather us together*, and deli-*

* For some of them were yet mixed, and dwelt in the same cities with the Heathen.

the Life of King DAVID. 137

ver us from the Heathen; that we may give thanks unto thy holy name, and glory in thy praise. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for ever and ever. And all the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord.

WHEN *David* had blessed the people, *he dealt* (saith the text) *to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine* (1 Chron. xvi. 3.); not to the princes, elders, and principal persons concerned in the procession only, but *to every one of Israel*. And to put it out of all doubt, that the whole of the people is here meant by *every one*, we are told, 2 Sam. vi. 19. *that he dealt among all the people, among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, &c.*

IT was now, as I humbly apprehend, the feast of tabernacles. That it was at some of the three feasts, is, I think, out of all doubt; for since the people were bound to come to *Jerusalem* upon all these feasts, it is not credible, that *David* would put them to the trouble and expence of coming thither unnecessarily, when the *ark* might as well be removed

138 *An Historical Account of*

moved at any of the solemn feasts, as at any other time; and that it was now removed at the feast of tabernacles, I conclude, (I think not irrationally) because it was confessedly in that feast that *Solomon* afterwards removed the *ark* into the temple *; and there is no reason to imagine, he would swerve from the example of his father, in that point. 2dly, Because it was at little more than three months distance (four at most) from the former feast, on which *David* first attempted to remove the *ark*; which I apprehend was the feast of weeks; because the feast of tabernacles is the only feast that answers to this distance from the feast of weeks, or from any other.

THE houses of *Judæa* are well known to have been flat-roof'd; and as it was customary with the *Jews* to erect tents on the tops of their houses on other occasions, it is natural to think they did so on those times, in which they were obliged by the law to live in booths and tents, in memory of their having done so whilst they wandered through the wilderness.

* 2 *Chron.* v. 3. which feast he is expressly said, ch. vii. ver. 8. to have kept seven days.

THAT

the Life of King DAVID. 139

THAT they dwelt thus, at the celebration of this feast, in the time of *Nehemiah*, is expressly said; and it is more rational to think they did so in the days of *David* and *Solomon*, when these feasts were much more crowded, and consequently the people more streightened for room.

TAKING it for granted then, that *Nehemiah* did no more in this point, than imitate the ancient usage of his country, we learn from him, that the custom was, to erect bowers of evergreens of various kinds, on the tops of their houses, at the beginning of the feast, and to dwell in them to the end of it. They also erected bowers in ranges throughout the larger streets of the city (*Neh.* viii*.) Now, to me, a city regularly built, the palace in the centre, crowned with bowers,

* It is true we are there told, ver. 17. that they had *not done so*, that is, they had not celebrated that feast in the same manner, since the days of *Josbua* the son of *Nun*, an expression which no commentator can make any thing of, and which I take, with great submission to better judgments, to be a corruption crept into the text; first, because no such feast is recorded to have been kept by *Josbua*, tho' it cannot be doubted that many such were. 2dly, Because the feast of tabernacles was kept not long before by *Ezra*, (*Ezra* iii. 4.) and doubtless as the law directed; and before that, to a demonstration, by *Solomon*, (*1 Kings* viii. 65, 66. *2 Chron.* vii. 6, 8, 9, 10.) and in booths or tents; for the word

bowers, and all the streets shooting out regularly from it, adorned in the same manner, the city in the centre of many fruitful hills encompassing it like an amphitheatre, and these also covered with tents and bowers, must form one of the most beautiful land-skips the human imagination can conceive; especially by night, when an infinite number of lights, glimmering through the branches, exhibited, as it were, so many moons breaking from behind a cloud; and how must the humane heart of him that beheld this be dilated with joy, when he saw the city in that situation afterwards described by *Isaiab*, *Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody*; when he considered all these bowers, filled with people, happy in the conscience of having discharged their duty towards God, and rejoicing after it*?

But

word which we render *booths*, *Pagnin*, in the margin of the bible, renders *tabernacula*, tents; and therefore the original reading I humbly apprehend to have been *since the days of Josiab*, and it is certain that since his days the law had never, that we know of, been read in so publick a manner to the whole body of the people at this feast, as it was now by *Nehemiab*. To put *Josbua* for *Josiab* was an easy and a natural error; and when *Josbua* was once got into the text, the son of *Nun* was an easy addition.

* It may be urged, that feasts of this kind are very liable to corruption and abuse; like our wakes and revels, which were

the Life of King DAVID. 141

But infinitely happier he, who could say to himself, I am, under GOD, the fountain of all this felicity!

HAPPY that prince, far happy beyond the common fate of kings, I had almost said, beyond the lot of mortals, whose people's piety is the effect of his instruction and example, and their genuine unpolluted joy the fruit of his bounty !

CRASSUS is celebrated in the accounts of antiquity, for entertaining the people of *Rome* at ten thousand tables in one day. The whole people (that is, the whole body of the denizens, inhabitants) of *Rome*, in its most flourishing estate, never equall'd one half, perhaps not one tenth part of the people of *Israel*. The adult males of *Israel* at this time may moderately be estimated at a million

were confessedly religious ceremonies at the first, although now far otherwise. I own the case may (I had almost said must) be so in all promiscuous assemblies of the sexes; but the reader will please to observe, that none but the males of *Israel* were obliged to attend these solemn festivals of the *Jews*†. It is true, women mixed in this procession of the ark; they danced in publick, but I am satisfied they feasted only in their private families. This appears sufficiently from the text, inasmuch as the distribution of flesh and wine was not to any number of both, in common, but to *each* man, and *each* woman, in particular.

* *Exod.* xxiii, 17. *Dent.* xvi, 16.

and

142 *An Historical Account of*

and a half, and the inadult at nearly double that number. They were all, as the law obliged them *, assembled at *Jerusalem* at this time, (lodged in the city, and surrounding region) together with their servants, and an infinite number of matrons, whose care and attendance upon their children was absolutely necessary, besides all those who inhabited the city, and all those whom curiosity drew thither on this great occasion: so that the glory of *David's* bounty on this occasion, seems to have held a higher proportion to that of *Crassus*, than the fame of his prowess to that of *Saul*; *Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands*: *Crassus* feasted his myriads, *David* his millions. Can you deny him to be in this instance *the man after God's own heart*? Whom else, or what else, could he imitate in this act of unexampled beneficence, but the bounty of that Being, who *openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness*?

WHEN *David* had blessed his people, and distributed a plentiful dole to each of them, the text tells us, *they all departed, every one to his house, or family, or place, or tent*;

* *Deut.* xvi. 16.

the Life of King DAVID. 143

for so the original word signifies, and so, I humbly apprehend, it should have been translated in this place. They might go each to their tent; but it was impossible they could go each to his own house, on that day, as *David* did; for the sacred text informs us, that he returned from blessing his people, *to bless his household*, and no doubt to share with them in the joy of that glorious solemnity so happily accomplished. But before he reached his house, *Michal* his wife, in her impotence of rage and indignation, went out to meet him. She had seen from her window the whole order of the procession, as it entered and passed through the city, and her husband, in transport of joy, dancing and playing at the head of it, that is, playing upon his lyre, and dancing to the joyful measure of the musick. The haughty daughter of the haughty *Saul* could not bear to see so great a king, divested of all his ensigns of royalty, and debased into an humble attendant upon the *ark*. In her opinion, his majesty suffered by such a demeanour, and his dignity was disgraced; and she vented her resentment in the bitterest reproaches her malice could invent, or rage suggest. *How glorious,*

144 *An Historical Account of*

glorious, says she, was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!

THE vile insinuated reproach was absolutely false, and *David* knew, that all his people well knew it to be so; and therefore gave himself no trouble to refute it, but barely contented himself to retort to the only truth contained in it, *viz.* his having *uncovered*, that is, disrobed himself of royalty; a tacit consent, that he had done so indeed, but it was in honour of that *GOD*, who had preferred him to her father.

HIS answer, carefully attended to in the original, is truly noble and majestick. *Michal's* reproach was, that *David* had uncovered himself *before handmaids*, &c. He answers (appealing to *GOD* for the purity and integrity of his intentions in that uncovering) *Before Jehovah --- which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel. Therefore will I play before Jehovah, and will be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight; and of the hand-*

handmaids which thou hast spoken of (far from being lessened in their esteem by this humiliation to GOD) of them shall I be had in honour.

THIS was an answer truly worthy a great king, who knew so well how to unite the humility of a saint with the majesty of a monarch; but it was an answer which, with all its propriety, and power of truth, seems to have had little influence upon the proud *Michal*: and possibly this was the ground of that reflection, subjoined to *David's* answer by the sacred penman, *Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child until the day of her death.*

BUT after all, suppose *David* had not been wholly acted in this point by religious motives, he very well understood, that it could noway misbecome a monarch, to mix with the publick festivities of his people; and that popularity could, in no other instance, better become him, than in sharing their pleasures without any shew of superiority. He very well understood, (as *Le Clerc* observes) that the more he acted a popular part among the *Hebrews*, the more he should endear himself to them; a principle better

146 *An Historical Account of*

suit to *David's* prudence, than to *Michal's* pride; and such as the greatest monarchs have not been ashamed of owning: as *Tacitus* tells us, that *Augustus* the *Roman* emperor thought it civil to mix with the pleasures of his people; and therefore he readily became a spectator of the publick shews.

POLICY taught *Augustus* to put himself upon a level with his people in their publick festivities; piety taught *David*, that all men were upon a level in the solemnities of religion.

I KNOW no one passage in the sacred writings, which hath been made more the object of libertine reproach and ridicule, than this of *David's* dancing in the procession of the ark: and yet there are who have considered it as much, perhaps more than any of his revilers; with equal penetration, I will not presume to say, but possibly with more constant and repeated attention, which sometimes does as well, in the dry drudgery of examining and comprehending plain facts. I will venture to go one step further; there are who have considered it perhaps with more attention than falls to the share of our modern men of genius, those great lights, which
have

have so dazzled the eyes of mankind, as to make them blind to the great truths of revelation; and yet have found nothing in it either to revile or ridicule.

MR. *Bayle* is worthily placed at the head of these libertine revilers; and here, methinks, the light arising to the candid reader, from Mr. *Bayle's* manner of treating this subject, will be a fair criterion, by which to estimate the justice, the wisdom, and the importance, of this favourite principle of modern free-thinkers, that ridicule is the test of true worth and excellence.

MR. *Bayle* discusses and distinguishes upon this point, with his usual and much adored penetration; determining, that if *David* uncovered his nakedness, the action might pass for an ill one, morally speaking: but if he only made himself contemptible by his postures, and by not supporting the dignity of his character, it was but an imprudence.

HE then cautions the reader, with great gravity, to consider the occasion of these capers, and this excess of joy, &c.

HE next quotes a passage from a modern author, who endeavoured to justify the nakedness of *Francis of Assise*, by that of *Da-*

148 *An Historical Account of*

vid; and concludes all, with that known candor which eminently reigns in all his reasonings relating to *David*, that *it would be thought very strange all over Europe, if upon a day of procession of the holy sacrament, kings should dance in the streets, without any thing but a little sash round the waist.*

I SHALL not insist, how inconsistent these decisions may be with some other parts of Mr. Bayle's conduct, or how ill becoming the most industrious defender of Cynic impudence*; but barely observe to the candid reader, that this great genius hath discussed and determined upon this point, (of *David's* dancing) in the three characters of casuist, critick and historian: May I presume, with due distance and submission, to inquire a little into his conduct under each of these characters? May I presume, in the first place, to submit it to the candid reader, whether a common casuist would not be apt to observe in answer to the first of these decisions, (and I dare say the whole college of physicians, and society of surgeons, would be apt to support him in it) that uncovering the naked-

* See Mr. Bayle's *Diogenes* and *Hipparchia*, and the note annexed.

ness, simply, and as such, never was, nor can be deemed, an action morally evil; and that, if it were so, no greatness of occasion, or goodness of intention, could justify it. And therefore the decisions of this great genius, upon this point, (with very great submission to his admirers) far from bringing any new light into the world, tend only to destroy what it had before, and to no purpose; inasmuch as they neither justify *David*, nor condemn him.

LET me be allowed to observe, in the next place, that, if the case of *Francis of Assise* was parallel to that of *David*, methinks this acute observer should have told us so; and if it was not, surely this accurate distinguisher, and lover of truth, should have shewn the difference. Every reader has a right to this, in a work intituled, critical and historical. Mr. *Bayle* has done neither: what new light then arises to the reader from this vein of ridicule? or, what are we to conclude either in honour of Mr. *Bayle*'s accuracy, or integrity, from this conduct?

As to his last representation of *David*, under the image of an *European* prince, dancing

150 *An Historical Account of*

naked in the procession of the sacrament, without any thing but a little sash about the waist, I own I am utterly at a loss what to say to it. There is indeed a most shameful image of indecency exhibited to the reader in this account of the matter. But most certainly it is not *David's*; nor known to the sacred writer.

It is very hard to be unprovoked with insults upon clear and sacred truths. I will not however indulge my indignation further, than by a serious appeal to the breast of every calm, and candid reader, I had almost said, to Mr. *Bayle's* greatest admirers, whether they would hesitate one moment, to pronounce this conduct, in any other man, and upon any other subject, either the effect of such gross ignorance, and unpardonable inattention to the sacred writings, or such mean malice, and stupid buffoonry, as rendered it equally beneath refutation and abuse.

HAD Mr. *Bayle* read no more in the sacred story, but that *David was girded with a linen ephod*, could he naturally have concluded from thence that he was naked; or would the direct contrary have been the natural inference? Suppose the *ephod* (against the clearest

clearest demonstration to the contrary) to be nothing but a sash, there is no instance or suspicion of its ever having been worn alone. The use of it, as of all other sashes, must be to bind, and keep succinct, the robe it surrounded ; so that the phrase of being *girded with a linen ephod*, far from implying nakedness, plainly implies a vesture ; and what that vesture was, and what other vesture it covered, hath been already shewn. And be the care with which the sacred writers have guarded against any just ground of reproach upon *David*, on this head, or least suspicion of indecency, (but in the reproaches of his wife) for ever adored !

WHEN the sacred text informs us, that *Doeg* slew in one day *fourscore and five persons that wore a linen ephod*, did it ever enter into any man's head to imagine, that he slew fourscore and five men (aged and venerable priests), that went stark-naked, all but a little sash about the waist ?

WHEN the sacred writer informs us *, that *Samuel ministered before the Lord being,*

* 1 Sam. ii.

152 *An Historical Account of*

a child, girded with a linen ephod, was it ever imagined that he ministered stark-naked, all but a little fash about the waist? not to insist, that his mother might then have spared herself the trouble of bringing him his annual coat. There never was any publick worship from the foundation of the earth, so guarded against any degree of nudity or indecency in the administration of it, as that of the *Aaronick* priesthood; besides *the long robe, the broidered coat, the ephod, and the girdle of the ephod*, which was to bind all, and keep them tight and succinct, they were obliged to wear linen breeches, to cover their nakedness; which from the best accounts of them, nearly resembled those now in use; 'bating, that they had no opening (either before or behind) and were tied round the loins, with a running string *. These the priests

* I am sensible that some criticks have imagined from God's commanding *Moses, Exod. xx. 26. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon*, that the breeches appointed for *Aaron* and his sons, were such as could not hide their nakedness, from those that stood below them, when they ministered upon the altar. But this is the effect of great inattention: For this precept respects only such altars as should be built (and at least one such was built, *Exod. xxiv. 4.*) before proper cloathing was prepared for *Aaron*, and his sons. That it respected
no

priests wore, and were prohibited, upon pain of death, to approach the altar, or minister in the holy place, without them. (*Exod.* xxviii. 42, 43.) Was it hard to perceive the further purpose and full extent of this precept? especially when the expression rendered in the *English* translation, to *minister in the holy place*, is in the original, *to minister in holiness*.

DAVID now ministered in a sacred solemnity; he so far put himself into the priests habit, as to wear the *ephod*, its robe, and its girdle. Is it to be imagined he would omit the only part of that dress, which could not be omitted in the ministration of sacred things, but upon penalty of death?

UZZAH had lately been struck dead before his eyes, for an error, seemingly of less consequence, in his ministry upon the *ark*. It is evident, that this made *David* study the whole ceremonial of removing it, with great care. Did he study it only to insult it, at the hazard of

no other altar, is, I think evident to a demonstration, inasmuch as the altar of God's own peculiar appointment and designing, had steps, *Ezek.* xliii. 17. and consequently, his priests a proper covering, which effectually hid their nakedness.

his

154 *An Historical Account of*

his own life? Let Mr. *Bayle* believe this, if he can ; for my part, I cannot.

I CANNOT help quoting, upon this occasion, an expression, which fell from a gentleman of my acquaintance, a little too much heated in dispute with a frivolous conceited antagonist; *Man, tho' born to misery, was never forced upon a more vexatious task, than to reason against ribaldry.*

NEED I add, after all this, that, when princes, or other persons, put off their robes of state, did it ever enter into the idea of such an unrobing, that they stript themselves stark-naked? And therefore, tho' we had not been told, that *David* put on a robe of *byssus* on this occasion, and girded it with a *linen ephod*, 1 *Chron.* xv. 27. and tho' we had no reason to believe, that he added any other part of the priestly dress, we should rationally have concluded, that, upon stripping off his regal robe, his under-garments continued the same, as before ; nor should we have hastily believ'd, that any man in his senses would, at his time of life, (turned of forty years) and in that cool season, which succeeds autumn, strip himself stark-naked. If no regard

gard to decency, yet, surely, a common care of health, would forbid this.

BUT, after all, the stripping off of his regal robes might sufficiently justify *Michal's* expression of his *uncovering himself*; as hath been shewn in the first part of this history.

UPON the whole, the candid reader is intirely referred to his own judgment, whether he will from henceforth consider Mr. *Bayle*, in this account of *David*, under the character of an honest and judicious writer of *an historical and critical dictionary*, or a negligent and inattentive examiner of truth, and shameless vender of ribaldry.

GIVE me leave to add, that the rude revilings of *Michal*, and raileries of Mr. *Bayle*, will be a monition to thinking men, how they hastily admit either the dictates of proud wrath, or dull drollery, for real truths.

C H A P. XII.

A Digression, containing a short Inquiry, in what Part of the City of DAVID the Ark was deposited.

WHEN *David* had deposited the ark of the covenant of the Lord in its place, the sacred historian relates, that he left there before it *Asaph* and his brethren (to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required); and *Obed-edom*, with their brethren, threescore and eight; *Obed-edom* also the son of *Jeduthun*, and *Hosab*, to be porters. And from hence, I think we may date the establishment of the publick liturgy of the *Jews*.

It may be thought a matter of more curiosity than use, to inquire, in what part of the city of *Sion*, *David* deposited the ark of the covenant; but I hope it will not long be so deemed; at least not by every reader.

THE city of *Sion* is in a peculiar manner intituled the city of God; and I humbly apprehend it to be so intituled, not only because
God

GOD chose that city, in preference to all others, to place his name there; but because he kept his residence there, in a very peculiar and distinguished manner; in his tabernacle, as in his palace: which I apprehend to have been placed in a court, in the centre of *David's* palace, on the summit of *Sion*.

FIRST, Because when *David* erected a new tabernacle to GOD at *Sion*, the original tabernacle of *Moses* was erected on *the high place at Gibeon*; whither he sent *Zadok* the priest and his brethren to attend it, (1 *Chron.* xvi. 39). And I apprehend it was erected upon distinguished eminences, from the beginning; which gave rise to the custom of sacrificing upon *the high places*. This was document enough to *David*, not to give his tabernacle a less eminent situation at *Sion*.

SECONDLY, Because the example of GOD at *Sinai* would naturally lead *David* into this way of thinking: and it is certain, that when GOD descended in a cloud from heaven, upon mount *Sinai*, in the presence of all his people, he descended and rested upon the summit of the mount. (*Exod.* xix. 20.)

AND that *David* was in this way of thinking, is evident enough from the lxxviiith *Psalms* :

158 *An Historical Account of*

Pfalm: where speaking of the *ark*, and tabernacle, the presence-chamber of God, he says, *And the Lord is among them (Israel) as in the holy place at Sinai*; that is, God on the top of the mount, and the people at set bounds round about (*Exod. xix. 12.*) The only difference was, that here *he ascended on high*, (*Pfalm. xlviii. 18.*) and there, he descended from on high.

THIRDLY, Because when God commanded the people to bring their several offerings towards forming, and furnishing the tabernacle, he adds, (*Exod. xxv. 8.*) *And they shall make me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in the midst of them**. And again, (*Exod. xxix. 45.*) *I will sanctify the tabernacle, &c. and I will dwell in the midst of the sons of Israel*†; that is, in the midst of the tribes denominated from those sons; *Reuben, Simeon, &c.*

FOURTHLY, Because (as the best comment upon this text) in all the marches and encampments of the sons of *Israel*, the court
of

* Which is thus very faultily rendered in the *English* translation. *And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell amongst them.*

† This also is faultily translated, *among the children of Israel.*

the Life of King DAVID. 159

of the tabernacle was always situate in the centre of the tribes, and the tabernacle in the centre of the court; like the tent of the captain general, (says *Lami*) in the midst of the army; three of the tribes to the east of it, three to the west, three to the north, and three to the south. (*Num. i. 53. Num. ii.*) And to this I apprehend, refers that passage in the lxxvth *Pſalm*, Ver. 6. *For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor yet from the south* *. *But God is the Judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.* And it is certain, that the first election or promotion of the elders, that is, the princes of the people, into the great council, was by the immediate influence of the Spirit of God.

FIFTHLY, When the men of *Kirjath-jearim* brought the *ark* into their city, they deposited it in the house of *Abinadab* in the hill:

* Here the prophet rebuking the pride of the princes, let them know, that their exaltation in reality proceeded neither from the people, nor their own merits, but from God the Centre and Source of power: and therefore they should be humbled in his presence, *I said unto the fools--- Deal not so foolishly---and to the wicked, Lift not up your horn; lift not up your horn on high, and speak not with a stiff neck; for promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south: but God is the Judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*

160 *An Historical Account of*

bill: (probably the most eminent and distinguished situation in the city) which hill *, faith *Beda*, overlook'd and commanded the whole town, and was therefore a fit place for the *ark*, which was *quasi arx totius Israelis*, the beauty and bulwark of *Israel*; and is it to be imagined, that *David*, who was so remarkably solicitous (as was before observ'd) to find out a fit place for it, would be less careful to honour it with an advantageous situation, than the men of *Kirjath-jearim*? especially when it appears from many passages in the *Psalms*, that he considered God as the fortress or citadel, upon which, both his own safety, and that of his city, depended.

Is it possible to imagine, that all this had no meaning! that the example of God himself, and the practice of his people for so many ages, was matter of no instruction and direction to so wise and so religious a prince, in a point, which he had so intirely at heart? Is this to be imagined, in a nation, accustomed to be instructed by emblems from the beginning?

IN the last place, it appears evidently from the text, that, when *David* set about

* This is Dr. Trapp's note.

removing

the Life of King DAVID. 161

removing the *ark*, he purposed to remove it to himself; that is, his own dwelling in *Sion*: and it appears, with great evidence, that he dwelt in the fort; that is, the citadel: and as the *ark* had the first place in his care, it is not in any degree to be doubted, that it had the first place in his city, and in his citadel. The tabernacle, in *David's* estimation, was the palace of God (*Lift up your heads, ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the king of glory shall come in*): and it could be no doubt with *David*, whether the palace of God should have the pre-eminence. Nothing could be a more natural or obvious emblem of the power and superintendence of Almighty God over all his works, than an elevated situation of his tabernacle, his palace, and throne, over every thing that encompassed it.

THE inference from all this inquiry, is plain and short. *Jerusalem* was the centre of union to all the tribes; and to this plainly refers, that passage in the 122^d Psalm, *Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity in itself. For thither the tribes go up to worship — There is the seat of judgment, &c. For my brethren and companions sakes* (that is, for

162 *An Historical Account of*

the common interest of the nation) *I will wish thee prosperity.*

JERUSALEM, the great seat and centre of religion, and justice, was the centre of union to all the tribes; the palace, the centre of the city; and the tabernacle, of the palace.

BLESSED and happy is that nation, whose prince is the centre of union to his people; and GOD (that is, true religion) the common centre and cement both of people and prince!

THE indulgent reader will, I hope, pardon this digression, merely as it contains matter of some little curiosity. It is not very tedious, and it pretends not to be very important.

CH A P. XIII.

*A Dissertation upon Dancing, in which
DAVID's Dancing before the Ark is
examined, and vindicated.*

IT is well known, that *David's* dancing before the *ark* hath long been matter of loud laughter with the libertine world, and a kind of silent shame with commentators, and
christian

the Life of King DAVID. 163

christian writers, of all kinds; who seem to hang down their heads, as this proceſſion of the *ark* paſſes, in confuſion for the king of *Iſrael*; ſome of them, now-and-then, dropping a ſhort word in his excuſe; not one daring to publiſh one page in his vindication; and but one or two, that I know of, daring to quote one paſſage from any ancient writer of note in his favour.

IN this ſituation of things, it may be thought a raſh and arduous attempt, to adventure any vindication of his conduct in this point; and I have myſelf long thought it ſo; till much meditation upon the ſubject, and a more thorough and enlarged examination of the opinions and practice of the wiſeſt and beſt men, in the wiſeſt and beſt ages, added to the precepts of God himſelf upon the point, thoroughly reconciled me, not only to the reaſonableneſs, but to the wiſdom and virtue of the practice; and encouraged me to offer my thoughts upon it, to the candid reader, in the natural order and arrangement, in which I found them, after long meditation, diſpoſed in my mind.

IN the firſt place then, I found dancing mixed with the religious ceremonies of the

164 *An Historical Account of*

Jews, from *Moses* to *David*; practised, and enjoined by *David*, not reprov'd by *Moses*; practised by the most religious king, and by the sister of the best and most religious law-giver; and commanded, as I apprehend, by God himself *. And therefore the only inquiry, that naturally fell in my way upon the point, was, to examine, whether this appointment was worthy of God. And the first question necessary to determine this, was, to inquire, whether the action was sufficiently grave and serious, or capable of being suited to the purposes of religion.

IN answer to this, I soon satisfied myself, that chearfulness and gayety of heart were, in many circumstances, as well suited to the purposes of religion, as the most solemn gravity; otherwise God would not so expressly and so repeatedly have commanded his people, to rejoice in their religious solemnities, before him.

* Inasmuch as the precept relating to this festival, the feast of tabernacles, *Deut.* xvi. 14. which we translate, *Thou shalt rejoice in thy feast*, is in the letter of the original, *Thou shalt rejoice in thy dance*. And *David's* practice is, I think, the best comment upon the text; and, at the same time, no bad proof that it was in this solemnity *David* danced; which he did not in the former.

IN

the Life of King DAVID. 165

IN the next place, that the proceſſion of the *ark* was ſlow and ſolemn, is beyond all doubt: and the very order of the proceſſion demonſtrates it.

THE fingers and trumpeters went foremoſt; and it is evident, that, if the proceſſion had not been ſlow, (with proper reſts, for the muſick, and relieving the carriers of the *ark*) neither could the firſt find breath for their voices, nor the ſecond for their inſtruments.

IN the next place, *David's* dancing and leaping are a proof of this: if the proceſſion were not ſlow, he could find convenient place for neither. Now it is evident from the text, that his leaping, was that kind of bounding and ſpringing from the ground, which is ſo remarkable in the lamb and the deer: ſpringing up high in air, and riſing again upon the deſcent, as if the body rebounded from the earth by its own elaſtick force: an action requiring, and denoting great activity and ſtrength; the moſt ſprightly, playful, and pleaſing of all animal motions; and ſuch as could not be exerted, but in the moſt erect and graceful attitude.

166 *An Historical Account of*

My next inquiry was, whether dancing any way tended to the happiness and well-being of mankind. Did it tend to make them healthful? Did it tend to make them innocently joyful? Could it tend to form their manners to piety and virtue?

THAT dancing tends to the health of the whole human species, is confessed on all hands; and capable of the plainest and most obvious proof: because, in the variety of its motions, actions, attitudes, and rests, it gives a more equable exercise to all the parts, muscles, nerves, and fibres of the body, than any other employment or amusement either of peace, or war. Now, more equable exercise gives more equable strength, and conveys more equable nourishment, to all the parts; and therefore better preserves them in proportion, activity and vigour; the effects of which are, a better shape, a better complexion, a more easy motion, a more erect and graceful carriage*, and a greater fitness for every exercise of peace or war; and of consequence, for every end of

* See this point, and every thing else relating to this subject, discussed more fully in Mr. *Burrette's* very learned *Memoires sur la danse*, &c. in the memoirs of the royal academy of Sciences, vol. I.

society. Thus far then, the appointment is most certainly worthy of God.

IN the next place, dancing is a most natural expression of joy, and at the same time a natural fountain of joy; it raises the spirits beyond the power of wine, and diffuses festivity and alacrity throughout the whole frame; and, as nothing is more agreeable to the Creator, than the innocent felicity of his creatures, so nothing could at once better become his wisdom and his goodness, than so to contrive his religious institutions, as to make his creatures find their felicity in their discharge of duty to him.

OUR third question is, whether dancing be capable of forming the manners to piety and virtue. And in order to determine this, let me beseech the candid reader to suspend his prejudices for a few moments; and calmly to consider, that dancing is a science of imitation *, as musick, poetry, and sculpture are; and its principal purpose is, to represent to the life the actions of men; and express the several passions that agitate them, by graceful

* As *Aristotle* and *Plutarch* confess it to be, *Aristotle* in the beginning of his *Poetics*; and *Plutarch* (L. 9.) of his *Symposiacks*.

168 *An Historical Account of*

ful, measured motions † : and consequently, this science of imitation is as capable as any of the rest, (perhaps more so) to be applied to the formation of the manners. And this is evident, even from the disrepute and disadvantage it hath fallen under, with the grave part of mankind, for some ages past. From whence did this arise, but from that corruption and looseness of manners introduced by the *pantomimes*, in their dances upon the publick theatres of *Italy* ; in which they imitated the lewd loves of their fabled divinities, and other abominations too vile to be mentioned ? And therefore *Plato*, who honoured this science to so high a degree, carefully banished every kind of dance, that could so much as be suspected of an immoral tendency, from his common-wealth ; such as those of the *Nymphs*, the *Ægipans*, the *Satyrs*, and *Sileni* ; tho' introduced under the pretext of certain religious ceremonials and expiations. Strange expiations, that

† *Scaliger* gives this definition of it in the first book of his *Poeticks*, cap. xviii. *motus compositus, numerosus, cum gestu effingens rem aut personam, vel quam canit, vel quam tacet.*

And *Athenæus* tells us, that the sculptors of *Greece* carefully studied the actions of the dancers, to learn from them the most graceful attitudes that suited each passion.

pollute

pollute where they should purify ! and introduced as many abominations into *Greece*, as the *pantomimes* did into *Italy* : abominations which even *Tiberius* himself thought too detestable to be endured in publick ; and therefore he banished the dancers from *Rome* ; altho' this practice is well known to have been in high esteem there, in the better ages of the common-wealth.

THE *Salii* (the priests of *Mars*) were instituted by *Numa*, their wisest and most virtuous king ; in whose ceremonials, the noblest men of the nation danced (as *Lucian* assures us) most gravely and religiously ; of whom, it is well known that *Scipio Africanus* the elder was one. But when the *pantomimes* introduced their corruptions, the practice fell into disgrace. This sufficiently accounts for *Domitian's* turning *Cæcilius Rufinus* *, a man of *quæstorial* dignity out of the *senate*, for being fond of dancing and gesticulation, says *Suetonius* ; for *Cicero's* reproaching *Gabinus*, a consular man, with having danced ; and saying, that *no sober man danced*. And the truth is, even drunkenness

* So *Xiphilin* names him. *Suetonius* only says, *vinum quæstorium*, &c.

170 *An Historical Account of*

was a wretched excuse for such dancing, as *Rome*, fast degenerating, then endured. But these objections no more affect the science of dancing, than the lewd tablets of *Tiberius* do the science of painting; which *Rubens*, *Raphael*, and many others, have sufficiently shewn to be capable of being redeemed from the vilest purposes, and applied to the noblest.

SIMONIDES used to say of dancing, that it was silent poetry; and of poetry, that it was eloquent dancing (*Plut. Sympos. lib. ix. c. 15.*) It is evident from hence, that he considered dancing, as one of those sciences, by which mankind might be instructed; as they were in a principal manner by poetry, for many ages: and had he considered dancing under the advantages both of verse and musick, added to it, he had seen it in a much nobler and more instructive light. It is out of all doubt, that virtue may be both taught and improved by painting; and does any man think, that virtue in dead colours is more affecting, animating, and inspiring, than virtue in living action; than virtue (as it were) in person? For example, — It is well known that the *Spartans* (who derived the origin of
this

the Life of King DAVID. 171

this science from their favourite divinities, (*Castor* and *Pollux*) marched to battle in certain movements, adjusted to the measures of martial sounds. Would the picture of *Cleomenes*, or *Leonidas*, leading his *Spartans* to battle, in a measured movement, (suppose it drawn to the life, by the pencil of *Apelles*) affect the spectators more, than the real hero, actually moving to the measure of martial sounds; now calling upon the gods, with hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, now clanging his shield, now shaking, and now poising his lance, as in act to dart it against the enemy; now springing forward to invade the foe, and now bounding back, or to either hand, to avoid his weapons? We may form some idea of this, from what *Julius Scaliger* tells of himself, in the forecited chapter of his poeticks. He tells us, that in his youth he often danced that martial dance, called the *Pyrrhick*, before the emperor *Maximilian*, to the astonishment of all *Germany*; and that the emperor was once so struck with his warlike activity, that he cried out, This lad was either born in a coat of mail, instead of a skin, or rocked in one, instead of a cradle.

THAT

172 *An Historical Account of*

THAT military virtue was taught and expressed by this practice, is, I think evident from a passage in *Plutarch's Laconick apophthegms*: he tells us, that *Agésilæus* the great being asked, why the *Spartans* used pipes when they fought, answered, *That when all move in measure, the cowards and the courageous may be made manifest*. Picture speaks only to the eye; but dancing, accompanied with vocal and instrumental musick, speaks to the eye, to the ear, to the soul: and to all these: in a variety of successive actions, attitudes, and accents, the most moving and interesting that it is possible to conceive. And are all these powers of sound and motion applicable only to the interest of military virtue? God forbid!—They are equally applicable to the promotion of humility, piety, penitence, and full trust and confidence in the power and protection of Almighty God. It would otherwise follow, that none of these virtues could be either represented in picture, or personated in sculpture, or in life; a position foolish in itself, and false in fact. It is true *David's* dancing upon the removal of the ark seems to have been expressive of joy and thanksgiving only; and, that properly effected,

the Life of King DAVID. 173

effected, his end was answered. But had he been called upon to praise GOD in the dance, upon other solemn occasions, I, for my own part, dare not say or surmise, that his dancing, I mean his moving in certain serious and solemn measures, suited to musick of the same character and tendency, might not have been as instructive and affecting, to all the purposes of piety, as his poetry and penitence. I do from my soul believe it might be more so, on this occasion of publick and religious joy, than both; when all the powers of harmony, melody, measure, graceful action, and hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, were added to the natural force, energy, and sublimity of those noble compositions.

THE candid reader is, I hope, by this time fully convinced, that the institution of dancing, as a ceremonial of religion, was neither unwise, nor unworthy of GOD; no way unworthy the fountain of felicity to appoint, or the man after GOD's own heart to practise — and I submit it to him, whether Mr. *Bayle*, in his sneers upon *David's* dancing, hath not justly drawn upon himself, the same imputation of ignorance, rashness, and immodesty, which *Lucian* urges against *Croton*,

174 *An Historical Account of*

Croton, for accusing *the very best thing in mortal life*, (so he rates the science of dancing) and censuring what he did not understand.

HAVING proceeded thus far, I next set myself to examine (more for the satisfaction of others than my own) the judgment of antiquity upon this point.

AND here, I cannot but observe, that I found a most surprising uniformity between the practice of the people of God, and both the opinions and practice of the wisest and most philosophick men of the heathen world in relation to this matter. With them also, I found its original deduced from heaven; some placing it under the presidency of the *Muses*; some making it coeval with the creation, and the great GOD of love; some deriving it from *Orpheus* and *Musæus*; others, from the later divinities of *Castor* and *Pollux*; and others from *Minerva*, the goddess of war and wisdom.

I FOUND it, after this, practised by the wisest nations, upon the most serious and solemn occasions; in their sacrifices, in their processions in honour of the gods, and in their marches against their enemies, invoking
the

the Life of King DAVID. 175

the aid of those gods. And *Strabo* tells us, (lib. x.) it was a custom common both to *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, to celebrate their sacrifices with festivity; some with enthusiasm, and some without; some with musick, and some without. And *Lucian* expressly says, that among the ancients, no ceremonial of religion, no expiation, no atonement, was accounted rightly accomplished, without dancing (*de saltatione*, p. 504.).

ATHENÆUS also has gathered great authorities upon this head. I shall mention only four: Lib. i. pag. 22. *Pindar*, says he, calls *Apollo* a dancer,

The dancer king of splendour *.

And *Homer*, or one of the *Homeridæ*, in the hymns to *Apollo* †,

*Graceful sustain and strike the sounding lyre,
More graceful now, and lofty in thy gait!*

(One would imagine the poet had beheld *David* in the procession). Nor did the ancients, (as he informs us) think dancing beneath the

* ——— Ὀρχησά ἀγλαίας ἀνδράων.

† Φόρμιγγ' ἐν χεῖρεσσιν ἔχων χαλκίην κιθάραν,
Καλὰ καὶ ὕψι βίβας. ———

176 *An Historical Account of*

dignity even of *Jupiter*; of whom *Eumelus* the *Corinthian* says,

Danc'd in the midst the Sire of gods and men†.

He tells us also, (lib. xiv. pag. 628.) that there was a graceful and magnificent kind of dance in use with the *Athenian* chorus, of which *Socrates* says in one of his poems,

Οἱ δὲ χοροῖς κάλλιστα θεῶς τιμῶσιν, ἀριστοὶ
Ἐν πολέμῳ. —

*Who in the chorus honour best the gods,
Are best in battle.*

I FOUND dancing also celebrated by the most antient and venerable poets; I found high praises upon it, in the mouths of the ablest philosophers; with many serious precepts for the regulation of the practice; and reflections upon the use and importance of it, to the formation of the manners.

IN one word, I found it practised by the wisest men, by more than one of the greatest heroes, and by the most dignified monarch of all antiquity; and practised to this day, from the earliest antiquity, by several nations of the east and south.

* Μέγιστον δ' ἄρχετο Πάτερ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε.

I THEN

the Life of King DAVID. 177

I THEN asked myself, Can all antiquity be mistaken and deluded in this point, from *Moses* to *Socrates*, and from *Socrates* to *Plutarch*? Would *Homer* have made a chorus of dancers an ornament of his hero's shield, and that ornament the work of a god *? And would he elsewhere (*Odyss.* l. 8.) have placed a chorus of dancers under the conduct and direction of the divine *Demodochus*, at once modulating their measures with his voice and lyre? And would *Hesiod* have made another chorus the ornament of the shield of *Hercules*, a hero and a demi-god, had dancing been below the regard of mortals?

IT is well known, from *Plato's* commonwealth, (b. 3.) that the *Egyptians* consecrated both musick and dancing to the sole service of the gods, by a law, which they gloried to have subsisted amongst them from time immemorial (long before this world of ours had any being). Could not only they, but the *Spartans* also, *Athenians*, *Thessalians*†,

* *Iliad* 18.

† The *Thessalians* (says *Lucian*) gave the rulers and leaders of the people the title of *præsaltores*, that is, *dance-leaders*: and thought it an high honour to inscribe the title upon the pedestals of their statues.

178 *An Historical Account of*

and *Cretans**, be mistaken, as one man, in this affair, in their wisest and most virtuous ages? Would *Cyrus*, the wisest, the most virtuous, the most venerable monarch of the earth, allow himself to lead the dance in a religious procession, a little before his death, (*Cyropæd.* l. 8.) if dancing were an indecency? Would *Socrates*, confessedly the wisest and best man of all antiquity, practise and praise it, in his advanced years; and *Plato*, the greatest philosopher, write precepts concerning it, (*de republ.* l. 5.) and celebrate its great importance towards forming the manners to virtue, if the practice were in itself either indecent, unwise or unvirtuous? Would so wise and so grave a people as the *Romans* endure it, in one of the most solemn ceremonies of their religion? Would so great a philosopher, and so good a man, as *Plutarch*, place this science under the direction of the muses, insinuating the advantages derived to mankind, from having their unruly passions restrained, and rightly directed, by apposite dancing, musick and song (*Symp.*

* He also tells us, that the nobility of *Crete* studied this art, (even those of the royal family) and thought it their glory to excel in it.

the Life of King DAVID. 179

l. 9. c. 14.); and elsewhere (c. 15.) lament, that dancing had undergone the fate of *Ibycus*, who, by some guilt against the gods, received now no honour but from men; adding, that it had now allied itself to mean musick, and fallen from that divine poetry to which it was once associated; by which means, it reigned now only in the theatres, among the many, but lost all honour with wise and excellent men? Is this the judgment of all the wiser and most virtuous ancients upon the point; and shall the supercilious sneers of a few conceited, superficial moderns, weigh down all these authorities and examples? Are we to take the measures of fit and just, from our own conceit and ignorance, from our prejudices, usages and manners, especially in climes so different, and ages and countries so remote from the practices we reprehend? Let me be allowed at least to doubt, whether a little less arrogance, and more modesty, might not better become us.

LET Mr. *Bayle* then, and his whole tribe of minute admirers and followers, accuse and revile *David*, for *praising God in the dance*; and let the wisdom of *Egypt*, the

180 *An Historical Account of*

South, and the East, acquit him! Let *Apollo*, and *Hercules*, *Castor* and *Pollux*, *Minerva*, and the *Muses*, justify and applaud him! Let **, and ***, and ***, (names with which I shall not, in indulgence to my vanity, adorn this work) satirize him; and *Musæus*, and (if the reader thinks fit) *Orpheus*, *Homer*, *Hesiod*, *Simonides*, and *Pindar*, celebrate him! Let *Cyrus*, and *Leonidas*, *Cleomenes*, and *Scipio* the elder, support him! Let *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Plutarch*, *Strabo*, (and even *Lucian*) vindicate and revere him! And, what is infinitely above all these put together, let the GOD of heaven command and accept him!

LET me be indulged to conclude this chapter with two short observations.

THE first is, that the institution of the *Salii*, or priests of *Mars*, among the *Romans*, was (as I humbly apprehend) derived from the *Jewish* priesthood.

THE *Jewish* high-priest wore a brodered coat; a tunick of gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet; a girdle, and a breast-plate: the *Roman Salii*, who had also their *præsul* or president, wore a belt, a breast-plate, and a painted coat, or a coat of many colours*,

* *Tunica picta* -- *versicolor*.

(the ground of which was purple) and a robe of state *. The *Roman Salii* (mixed with young girls, called *Salian* virgins) danced, and sung verses, as *Livy* assures us, (*lib.* 1.) in their processions, in honour of *Mars*, the god of war: The *Jewish* priests danced, and sung verses, in their processions, in honour of the *Lord of hosts*; and maids and matrons joined in the chorus. Now, the *Lord of hosts*, in the phraseology of the *Jews*, is most certainly *Mars* in the style of the Heathen.

THE next observation is this, that the joy and festivity enjoined the *Jews* in their religious solemnities, gave a most noble and distinguished pre-eminence to the ceremonials of *God's* appointment, to his peculiar people, above those of the deluded Heathen round about them. Whilst the priests of *Baal* were crying, and cutting their flesh, in honour of their idols; the priests of the true *God* were in high enjoyment of their being, and singing *Halleluiahs* to their Maker! Whilst the wretched worshippers of *Tham-*

* *Trabea.*

182 *An Historical Account of*

muz were weeping the death *, and whining, in doleful strains, the lewd adulterous love of their fabled divinity; the maidens and matrons of *Israel* were dancing, playing upon psalteries and timbrels, and singing songs of joy and thanksgiving, to the God of life, and the pure fountain of love! Whilst the fervile *Saturnine* adorers of *Moloch* were ruthlessly sacrificing their own issue, their sons and daughters †, to that monster of cruelty, and knew no other use of musick than to drown their dying cries §; the sons and daughters of *Israel* were pouring out their praises to the God of mercy, upon the trumpet, the cornet, the loud cymbal, the well-tuned cymbal, warbling them upon the harp, the lute and the lyre, breatheing them from the tuneful voice, and *rejoicing in the dance*. — Blessed disparity, pre-eminence

* *Plutarch* tells us, that when some persons from *Thebes* asked *Lycurgus's* opinion about the sacrifices and lamentations which they had instituted in honour of *Leucothea*, he answered; *If you think her a goddess, do not lament; if a woman, do not sacrifice to her as a goddess.* Plut. Lacon. Apophthegms.

† *Jerem.* vii. 31. xix. 4, 5. *2 Kings* iii. 27.

§ That this was the practice of the parents, who stood by on these occasions, *Plutarch* informs us in his treatise upon superstition.

worthy

worthy the GOD of mercy and truth, and fountain of felicity*!

CHAP. XI

DAVID *designs to build a Temple, but is forbidden. God's Promises to his Posterity. DAVID's Thanksgivings.*

NOW was *David at rest*, as the sacred writer informs us, *from all his enemies round about him*: and now doubtless he recollected that command of GOD to his people, in the xiith chap. of *Deuteronomy*, by his prophet *Moses*, that, *When God should give them rest from all their enemies round about, so that they should dwell in safety, then (saith Moses) there shall be a place, which the Lord your God shall choose, to cause his Name to dwell there: thither shall ye bring all that I*

* If it be asked, Whether this encomium upon dancing be intended as an argument for introducing that exercise into the worship of GOD? (as one very judicious reader of this work in manuscript apprehended it might) I answer, that my only view was to defend a practice appointed by GOD to a particular people, and at a particular time; and, it may be, now omitted, under the Christian œconomy, with equal wisdom.

184 *An Historical Account of*

command you; your burnt-offerings, and your sacrifices, your tythes, &c. that is, that it should be the residence of the ark of GOD, and the seat of his service; consequently there should be his temple. *Jerusalem* was that chosen place. GOD had now given his people rest, from all their enemies round about them: and therefore *David* reasonably concluded, that now was the time for erecting the temple, and establishing the service of GOD in all its perfection. And now, as is generally believed, he penn'd the xciiid *Psalms* as a hymn of thanksgiving to GOD, for that blessing of peace and rest bestowed upon his people. But whoever attends carefully to the style of that *Psalms*, will, I imagine, be more inclined to believe it written in the interval between the first *Philistine* defeat, related in the ixth chapter of this history, and their second invasion; upon their confederating a-new, and gathering together to a second attempt against him.

To this, I apprehend, refer these words in the 7th verse of this *Psalms*: *When the wicked spring up as the grass.* He had just mowed down his enemies, and they were now springing up again, like a new crop of grass from
a rich

the Life of King DAVID. 185

a rich field: but how flourishing soever these workers of iniquity were, *David* fully confided, that they should soon *be destroyed for ever*. The glory of sinners is, at best, but the flower of a withering grass: *but the righteous * shall flourish like a palm-tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon*, which, at the same time that it enlarges upon earth, rises towards heaven.

THE Psalm which I take to be the peculiar composition of this interval of rest, which succeeded this settlement of the ark in its place, is the lxxxivth †; for the sacred historian informs us, that this settlement was no sooner over, than *David* set his heart upon building a temple to GOD; an edifice in some measure worthy of his majesty! at least, as far as earthly magnificence can attain or express. He could not bear, that his own sovereignty

* Ver. 12.

† The author of this Psalm speaks of the altars of GOD in a manner that shews them to be then comparatively desolated. --- There were at this time two altars erected in the kingdom of *Judea* to the true GOD, but neither of them in the place of his own appointment; that at *Hebron* not attended by any appointed number of *priests*, that we know of, as that at *Gibeon* was, although but slenderly, and by a few; so little crowded, that the birds of the air might build unmolested in them. --- We hear only of one altar after the building

186 *An Historical Account of*

reignty should be set off by a palace of cedar, whilst the ark of GOD, the emblem and pledge of his presence, and throne of his earthly residence, dwelt under curtains. *David's* soul was far exalted above those groveling and abject spirits, which imagine the meanest mansions sufficient for the service of GOD; and for that reason are little solicitous to have their churches better than barns, unanxious of adding any advantages or distinctions, that tended to enlarge, to ennoble, to exalt their souls. Had *David* been in this way of thinking, it is certain, the law of *Moses* then extant,

building of the temple; therefore this Psalm was written before that period. The author of this Psalm speaks of the tabernacles of GOD; there were two tabernacles now extant: we hear of no tabernacle after the building of the temple; therefore this Psalm was written before that period.

The author of this Psalm wishes eagerly for the *courts of the Lord*: the tabernacle had but one court; therefore his wishes must be for the courts of the temple, which were many; and as the temple was not yet extant, these wishes could only mean the author's eager desire to see that temple erected.

N. B. *Since this note was written, another interpretation of the passage referred to in the lxxxivth Psalm hath been suggested to me, by a person whose judgment hath great weight with me. In his opinion, the passage relating to the sparrow and swallow should be thus understood; as if David had said, The swallow hath an house, and the sparrow a nest, &c. but my house and my rest are with thee; even thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.*

and

the Life of King DAVID. 187

and in the hands of every *Israelite*, the priests, the *Levites*, the prophets and their schools, the altars at *Hebron* and *Gibeon*, and the tabernacles at *Gibeon* and *Jerusalem*, their service, and their attendants, might sufficiently have answered the purposes of religion, to his own people. But this was but a small part of *David's* design. His aim was, to give the worship of GOD all the dignity due to it; to diffuse the glory of GOD *throughout the ends of the earth*; that the light of true religion should rise up from *Jerusalem*, like *the sun from his tabernacle*; that, like that, its going forth should be from *the uttermost parts of the heaven*, and its circuit unto the ends of it; and that nothing should be hid from its vital and heavenly influence. This (as I elsewhere observed) appears evidently from the 1th Psalm (v. 1, 2.): *The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth, from the rising of the sun, unto the going down thereof. Out of Sion the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.*

LET us then form to ourselves the idea of a man, greatly delighted with what he had already done towards the establishment of the divine worship, and the propagation of
true

188 *An Historical Account of*

true religion; but at the same time, under a deep sense of the deficiency of his best endeavours, and an ardent desire of doing more; filled with the image of a glorious and magnificent temple, impressed upon him by the immediate influence of the Spirit of God*; conscious of the immense sums requisite to the undertaking, and his own inability to supply them; but at the same time, well experienced, and fully confiding, in the bounty and beneficence of the Almighty to him. That God who had raised him from the fold to a throne, could as easily enable him to build a house for his worship, as far transcending his palace, as that did his original cottage. It is true, his country was at present poor; but it was as easy for God to make a poor country rich, as to fill a barren and dry valley with fountains of living water. It was a fixed principle with *David*, that he whose strength was in God, must be blessed (ver. 5.); and that if he had *his ways* at heart, he must go on from strength to strength, and find no difficulty insuperable in the prosecution of his upright purposes.

* 1 Chron. xxviii. 11, 12. Here we are told, that *David* gave *Solomon* the pattern of the porch, &c. and of all that he had by the Spirit, of the house, &c.

the Life of King DAVID. 189

LET the reader then consider *David* thus circumstanced (as undoubtedly he was at this time); and if he be convinced from the note referred to in p. 185. that this Psalm could not be written after the building of the temple, he will best judge for himself, whether it was most probably written in this situation of *David's* mind and circumstances.

THAT *David* was highly delighted with the establishment of the tabernacle, and its service, and at the same time had his heart set upon building the temple, is not to be denied. The reader then will best judge for himself, who else but *David* could cry out in that transport of delight, fervent piety, ardent desire, and earnest longing for the temple of GOD, *Psal. lxxxiv. 1. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!----*
*2. My soul longeth *, yea even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.---O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer.---O Lord our shield, look upon the face of thine anointed.--- For the Lord God is a sun and a shield: the Lord*

* If the humble tabernacles of GOD were so delightful, how much more the courts of the temple in all their grandeur and glory!

will

190 *An Historical Account of*

will give grace and glory; no good thing will he with-hold from them that walk uprightly.

LET us suppose then, (what is not at all unnatural) that *David*, upon conceiving this great design of building the temple, had poured out his purpose in fervent prayers to *GOD*, imploring his aid and protection, and confiding in his support, to the accomplishment of it; could any words more aptly or emphatically express the fulness of his heart upon this head than those of this Psalm?

LET us suppose him to have communicated any psalm he composed upon this occasion, to *Nathan*, his prophet, and his friend; what other answer could the prophet make to him, on supposition that this was the very Psalm so communicated, than that which we find recorded of him 2 *Sam.* vii. 3. let the candid reader examine and compare.

PSALMIST.

My soul longeth, yea even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.---

*Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee.--
No good thing will he with-hold from them
that*

the Life of King DAVID. 191
that walk uprightly.----O Lord of hosts,
blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

PROPHET.

Go, do all that is in thine heart: for the
Lord is with thee.

NATHAN found that the purpose of building the temple was deep at *David's* heart; he perceived that God had hitherto remarkably blessed and protected him, and that *David* intirely relied upon his protection; and therefore, when he told him of his design to build the temple, he bids him *go and do all that was in his heart; for the Lord was with him.*

THIS was the decision of a prophet, in favour of *David's* purpose; but we learn from this history, that even the decisions of prophets, in favour of the best purposes, without the immediate authority of God, are not always to be depended upon (Lines of unerring guidance are too narrow for the devious spirit of man *): for the sacred writers inform us, that *the word of the Lord came that same night to Nathan, informing*

* *Nimis angusta res est nuspiam errare.*

him

192 *An Historical Account of*

him to this purpose, and commanding him to go and tell *David* his servant, that he approved of his intention to build him an house, but had reserved the execution of that great design for one of his sons: that, as his people had hitherto been in a fluctuating unsettled state, he had chosen to have the ark of his covenant deposited in a tabernacle, capable of being carried from place to place, as their occasions required: that he had now appointed a place for them, and would establish them, in a more settled and undisturbed condition, than had hitherto been indulged them; unmolested and unoppressed by the wicked world around them, as he then was: that as for *David* himself, God, who had raised him from an humble shepherd, to a monarch of no mean figure and esteem in the earth, who had signally blessed him in all his undertakings, had yet a great deal of other work for him to do: that as he had hitherto subdued all his enemies before him, he would still continue to do so, (for many more yet remained to be conquered *) till they were

* This is plainly implied in that promise, 1 Chron. xvii. 10. *Moreover I will subdue all thine enemies.*

all destroyed.---There is another reason elsewhere * assigned for GOD's refusing to let *David* build him an house; but as it is probable that was given at another time, it will be more properly considered in the subsequent part of this history.

THIS refusal was followed by a promise full of consolation, that GOD would assuredly make him an house; and when his days were fulfilled, and he should sleep with his fathers, he would set up his seed after him, *which should be of his sons*, and establish his kingdom; adding, *He shall build an house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever: I will be his father, and he shall be my son; if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men †, and with the stripes of the children of men; but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I put away before thee; and thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee ||.*

THESE

* 1 Chron. xxii. 1 Kings v.

† It is remarkable, that the original text is, *old men*; that is, with the gentleness of men to the children of their old age.

|| This is a plain indication of the immortality of the soul, and a sure promise to *David*, that he himself should see that establishment, and continuance of it; which makes

194 *An Historical Account of*

THESE promises plainly respect *Solomon*, and his posterity according to the flesh, the kings of *Judah*: but there is a supplement to this account, recorded in the xviith chap. of the first book of *Chronicles*, at the 14th verse; which contains a promise, that can only respect that son of *David*, who was at the same time strictly and immediately the Son of God---*I will settle him in my house**, and in my kingdom, for ever; and his throne shall be established for evermore. And this is accordingly applied to our blessed Saviour by an angel from heaven, in the first chapter of St. *Luke's* gospel at the 32^d and 33^d verses: *And he shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he*

that passage in the xxixth Psalm composed by *David* (and as I am fully satisfied, referring to this passage) clear and intelligible, which hath hitherto been utterly unintelligible to me. *He asked Life of thee, and thou gavest him length of days for ever and ever. His glory is great in thy salvation; honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him; for thou hast made him most blessed for ever.*---

* That by the house of God is meant his church, St. *Paul* fully informs us, 1 *Tim.* iii. 15. *That thou mayst know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth.*

shall

the Life of King DAVID. 195

*shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever.
And of his kingdom there shall be no end*.*

THE goodness of GOD to his servant *David* is eminently conspicuous in this message. He refused him the request which he had set his heart upon, above all other ; the granting of which, I am satisfied, would have given him more solid joy, than the sovereignty of the whole earth : but he softened the refusal, by the kindest promises and assurances ; by promises of signal and long continuing favours, to his posterity ; long continuing in earthly splendor and authority, and concluding in an eternal dominion over the church and people of GOD.

As soon as *Nathan* had delivered this divine message to the king, *David*, overwhelmed at once with gratitude and astonishment at the infinite bounty of GOD to him, hastens to the tabernacle, to indulge the overflowings of his heart, and pour out his acknowledgments to his Divine Benefactor. Accordingly, he sat down before the throne of GOD, unquestionably crouching,

* The like application is also made by *St. Paul*, *Heb. i. 5.*
And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son.

196 *An Historical Account of*

and sitting upon his feet, the posture of most submissive humiliation in the eastern world; and there, in broken accents of throbbing and panting gratitude, he labours out his prayers of praises and thanksgivings to his Maker, for his unbounded, unmerited, and unspeakable mercies.

WHO am I, O Lord God — and what is my house — that thou hast brought me hitherto? — And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God — but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come, — and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree. — O Lord God — and what can David say more unto thee? — For thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant. —*

HERE he ceased and paused — the style and sentence shews it --- And after a while resumes his acknowledgments, in a strain, that demonstrates the broken, oppressed, unconnected condition of his thoughts, bewildered with gratitude, and an overflowing sense of the divine goodness to him.

* It is observable, that what *Nathan* expresses by *for ever*, *David* explains by *a long time to come*; which plainly proves, that *for ever* does not always mean a perpetual duration according to the *Hebrew* idiom.

FOR

the Life of King DAVID. 197

FOR thy work's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things---to make thy servant know ---Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God! for there is none like thee, neither any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

AND here his contemplation upon the grandeur and immensity of the Divine Being, and peculiar goodness to himself, carries him to consider his infinite mercies to his peculiar people: And what one nation in the earth is like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem, to be his own people, to make thee a name of greatness and terribleness, by driving out nations from before thy people, whom thou hast redeemed out of Egypt, the nations, and their gods? --- For thy people Israel didst thou make thine own people for ever; and thou, Lord, becamest their God.

AND now, recollecting that it was principally for their sakes he was exalted and established in the throne, he proceeds with more confidence and earnestness to implore of God the completion of his promises to himself, and his house. ----

THEREFORE now, Lord, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy ser-

198 *An Historical Account of*

vant, and concerning his house, be established for ever; and do as thou hast said.*

† FOR thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, Lord, art become their God. And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. And let thy Name be magnified for ever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. And now, O Lord God, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant. Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee. For thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it, and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever. To my eye the workings of a breast oppressed and overflowing with grati-

** 1 Chron. xvii. 23.*

† 2 Sam. vii. 24, to the end.

tude,

tude, are painted stronger in this prayer, than I ever observed them in any other instance. It is easy to see, that his heart was wholly possess'd with a subject which he did not know how to quit, because he did not know how to do justice to his own sense of the inestimable blessings poured down upon himself, and promised to his posterity; and much less to the infinite bounty of his benefactor. In the earnestness and contention of his prayer, I behold him in the light of *Jacob wrestling with God*, and crying out, *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me*; and in the fulness of his gratitude to that God, *who loaded him with his benefits*, I imagine I behold him in the conclusion, bowing down, and submitting in the words of the 3^d Psalm, ver. 8. *Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: thy blessing is upon thy people.*

THEN, in the rapture of such transcendent, such astonishing blessings from God, was composed the *xxist Psalm*; and indeed well might *David* cry out upon that glorious occasion, *The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord, and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of*
O 4 his

his lips. For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold upon his head. He asked life of thee, and thou gavest him length of days, for ever and ever.

C H A P. XV.

DAVID *invades Philistia, and takes Gath, &c.---He then invades and subdues Moab.*

DAVID, having learnt from *Nathan's* answer, related in the last chapter, that altho' he was not to build a temple to GOD, yet he was appointed to subdue his enemies, and establish his people in peace and security, was naturally led to reflect, that since they were not yet in full possession of the promised land, it was his peculiar business to drive out the enemy, and settle his people in it. Besides this, his son was to build a temple, which required immense sums to erect and to adorn it. The wealth of the vanquished of course becomes the victor's; and much of that

that in the hands of his devoted enemies, was employ'd (under the colour of religion) to the vilest purposes that can debase or deprave the human nature. What nobler resolution could be taken, than to rescue that treasure from the vilest of all uses, and apply it to the noblest? To employ the spoils of the most detestable idolatry to the establishment and enlargement of the pure and perfect worship of the only GOD?

THE *Philistines* had lately invaded *Israel* twice, and were successfully repulsed; and hostilities had now ceased on both sides, apparently by tacit consent; but as no treaty of peace had intervened, (for no trace or hint of any such treaty is found in the sacred writers) *David* was at full liberty to renew them whenever he pleased; and therefore Mr. *Bayle* is, with great submission, very idle in his censures upon this part of *David's* conduct: and when he is found so very uncautious in so many decisions, the impartial reader hath an unquestionable right to suspect him in all;

*While Wits and Templers ev'ry Sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish Face of Praise.*

BUT

202 *An Historical Account of*

BUT to proceed :

DAVID finding now a fit occasion of renewing hostilities against the *Philistines*, did so accordingly.

IT is obvious to observe upon this occasion, that *David*, from the constitution of his militia, had more advantages for invading his enemies, sudden and unsuspected, than any prince we read of in history : inasmuch as at the going out of one course, and the coming in of another, (month by month) forty-eight thousand men, well armed and appointed, were on foot ; and came together once every month, on one day. A number (even supposing their officers included) sufficient to undertake almost any expedition : at least, if we may rely either upon the judgment of one of the greatest captains of the last age, who thought a smaller number sufficient for the command of any one man *, or the example of the greatest captains, and most successful armies of all antiquity. And, as this interchange of courses caused an incessant marching of the

* *Turenne* thought an army of thirty-thousand men as much as one man could command.

forces

forces to and fro, on the day of the change, it was easy, under that cover, to assemble the army in one day, and in any number, and at what part of the kingdom the king pleased; and consequently, to invade and surprise his enemies, on whatever quarter he thought fit; as I believe he surprised the *Philistines* at this time. It is true, the text only tells us, that *David smote and subdued them*. But, if we estimated the success of this expedition by the conciseness of the relator's style, we should be obliged to conclude, that he accomplished it, at least, with one degree of greater dispatch, than *Cæsar* did that conquest, which he relates only by those celebrated three words, *Veni, vidi, vici* *. The truth is, the sacred historians recount expeditions in three words, which, in the hands of heathen writers, would fill volumes: but it should be observed, that they do this, from a thorough contempt of that vanity which contracted *Cæsar's* style.

THEIR business is, to illustrate the dispensations of divine providence, in the several instances of God's infinite wisdom, goodness, and mercy, to the sons of men; and

* I came, I saw, I conquered.

above all, his steady rewards of righteousness, and chastisements of guilt; and to attain that end, they hasten to the events of actions, and counsels, and the purposes of Providence accomplished by them; despising, for the most part, all that display of the human prudence and prowess in the conduct of them, together with the minuter circumstances of time, place, and accidents, which inlarge and embellish the works of common writers. Hence it is, that we are left utterly in the dark, with regard to the time, manner, and occasion of *David's* commencing this war; and are only informed, that after he had defeated the enemy, he next assaulted and took (whether by siege or storm, is not said) *Gath and her towns, out of the hand of the Philistines*; (1 Chron. xviii. 1.) in the original it is, *Gath and her daughters*: the taking of which places, is, in the viiith chap. of the 2^d book of *Samuel*, expressed by the taking of *Metbeg Ammah*; which some learned men think should be translated, *Metbeg and her mother*; that is, the daughter and the mother city, *Metbeg*, and *Gath*, her metropolis: altho' others chuse rather to translate those words *Metbeg Ammah*, *The*
bridle

bridle of the angle; apprehending that *Gath* was so called, on account of its being a garrison, which kept all the contiguous country of *Judæa* in awe; and was now in the hands of *David*, a curb upon the *Philistines*, as it was before upon the *Jews*. This is certain, it was the metropolis of one of the five *Philistine* principalities; the seat of their kings, and the mother of giants. This also is certain, that upon the taking of it *Goliath's* family was not destroyed: for we afterwards hear of them more than once, in the course of this history. As they were a gigantick family, I imagine they might have been spared by *David*, from an uncommon strain of generosity; or as monuments of the truth and greatness of his victory over *Goliath*. I am far from pronouncing, that vanity was the motive of his mercy to that race; but this must be owned, that if human frailty had any share in it, *David* suffered a sufficient chastisement for it; as will be seen in the sequel of this history.

DAVID next invaded and subdued *Moab* after *Amalek*, the most antient, inveterate, and hereditary enemy of the *Jewish* race; altho' descended from *Lot* their kinsman.

And

206 *An Historical Account of*

And altho' the *Moabites* earnestly invited *Balaam* to curse *Israel*, and confederated with *Midian* to destroy them; yet could not the *Israelites* be provoked to do them any evil: but passed them by, unmolested; and fetched a compass round their border, rather than give them any umbrage, or disquiet, by marching thro' their country. The reason of this conduct is explained by *Moses*, in the iid chap. of *Deut.* ver. 9. where he tells us, that he received an exprefs prohibition from *GOD*, either to distress them, or contend with them in battle, or strip them of their territories *. But at the same time that they were commanded not to molest them, or make war against them, or take away any of their territories; they were as exprefly commanded never to make peace, or enter into an alliance with them, or promote their well-being, by any means whatsoever; or so much as to admit any man of that nation into the congregation of *Israel* to the tenth generation †. Now these are parts of the sacred

* *And the Lord said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession, because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession.*

† *Deut.* xxiii. 3, 4, 5, 6.

history,

history, which, in my humble opinion, demonstrate at once their own truth, and divine origin. It never yet made any part of human policy, never to have either peace or war with aneighbour-nation; and much less, neither to invade or conquer a weaker hostile nation, (notwithstanding the most grievous provocations) already more than half subdued by their own fears*, when it could be done with great ease, and to great advantage. Now, it is demonstrable from the sacred history, that the *Jews* were commanded to hold this conduct with regard to the *Moabites*, and actually did so, where their obedience was put to the hardest trial. Nor is there any other imaginable reason, why they spared *Moab*, a weaker nation, after they had utterly defeated *Amalek*, a much stronger: and even after they had destroyed *Sihon* the oppressor of *Moab*, and made themselves absolute masters of his country. But the candid reader will please to observe, that this prohibition from Almighty God could never be intended either to hinder *Israel* from

* Numb. xxii. 3. *And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was sore distressed because of the children of Israel.*

repelling

208 *An Historical Account of*

repelling a *Moabite* invasion, or retorting the injury, and chastising the authors.

WE have seen in the ixth chapter of this history, that the *Moabites* were confederate with the *Philistines*, and other nations, in their late invasions of *Judæa*: and it seems to have been *David's* policy at this time, after he had defeated and dispersed the confederate army, to invade each of those nations apart which made it up. Accordingly we find, that after he had invaded and humbled *Philistia*, he *smote and subdued Moab*. Then was fulfilled that remarkable prophecy of *Balaam*, *Numb. xxiv. 17, 18.* *A sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth: and Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies, and Israel shall do valiantly.* Agreeably to the first part of this prediction, the text tells us, that *David smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground: even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive; and so the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts.*

FEW

Few texts have more perplexed the learned than this. Some think, the expression of *casting them down to the ground*, alludes to an *Eastern* practice of making those who were condemned to die, lie upon their faces, till they received the executioner's stroke: And, if this was the case, then may we reasonably conclude, (inasmuch as this was no *Jewish* punishment) that *David* executed that most wise and righteous law of retaliation upon the *Moabites*, by treating them in the same manner they were wont to treat those whom they conquered. Others imagine, with more reason, that the expression of *casting down*, refers to the demolition of those forts and strong-holds which made obstinate resistance; upon the taking of which, they discriminated between those who were hardy and determined in refusing all offers of mercy, upon their submission, and those who were unwillingly withheld by their rulers and commanders from accepting the mercy offered them; saving the one, and putting the other to death. And agreeably to this sense, the *Hebrew* text may, and I think ought to be understood thus: With

210 *An Historical Account of*

two lines measured he, *viz.* one * to put to death (those obstinate few who rejected all offers of mercy); and with one full line (in the original, a line of plenitude) to keep alive; that is, to save all those who would have submitted, and accepted proffered mercy, had they been suffered.

AND this interpretation is, I think, strengthened by the expressions made use of by the sacred writer on this occasion. Now in the original, the word which we render the *corners* of *Moab*, might better be translated the *princes* of *Moab*, as the word which we render *destroy* (*destroy all the children of Sheth*) signifies in the original to *unwall*: and then the plain sense of the text will stand thus; that this sceptre, which should arise out of *Israel*, should smite the *princes*, that is, the ruling commanding part of *Moab*, and *unwall*, that is, demolish their fenced cities, or rather their fortifications. And agreeably to this interpretation, I apprehend that *David* put the commanding officers, in every city that resisted, to death, and spared the people: and it appears suf-

* Such ellipses are common in the sacred style, and must, in many instances, necessarily be understood and supplied in the same manner that I suppose this should.

ficiently

the Life of King DAVID. 211

ficiently from the subsequent part of the text, that they who submitted were received into mercy, and became tributary.

LET it be observed upon this occasion, that *David* was a prophet, and thoroughly versed in the scriptures; and when he had there learnt, that a king was to arise out of *Jacob*, who should one day smite and subdue *Moab*, it was not hard for him to discern in the spirit of prophecy, that he himself was that king, especially after the message delivered to him by *Nathan*, from the word of the LORD. And there is no doubt but he executed the sentence denounced against *Moab*, in the prophecy of *Balaam*, in that sense in which the Spirit of GOD denounced it *, which I apprehend to be that now explained.

BUT, supposing *David* destroyed two-thirds of the *Moabites* on this occasion, and

* That he carefully attended to the sense of the prophecy on this occasion, may, I think, be fairly inferred both from the nature of the thing, and from the strict attention he paid to every part of the divine commands in relation to that people; for he neither distressed, nor contended with them in battle, unassaulted; nor when he conquered them in battle, did he seek to violate their peace or prosperity, or strip them of their lands: he contented himself with subduing and making them tributary.

212 *An Historical Account of*

saved only one-third, (for so some understand the text) the severity of this chastisement was no greater than that which God himself denounces against his own people for their sins, *Zeck. xiii. 8. And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off, and die, but the third shall be left therein.* And why might not the sins of the *Moabites* deserve this chastisement now, as those of the *Jews* did at the time referred to in this prophecy? The greatest sins the *Jews* ever committed against God, were those corruptions which they copied from their neighbour-nations; the most abominable of all which were practised by the very nation we are now speaking of*: and therefore there is good reason to believe, that they now deserved the same severity of vengeance from the justice of God, which he afterwards inflicted upon his own people.

* *Numb. xxv. Judges x. 6. 1 Kings xi. 7. 2 Kings iii. 27. Amos ii. 2. Ezra ix. 1.*

CHAP. XVI.

DAVID conquers the Syrians and Edomites. Hadadezer proved to be the Hadad of Nicolaus Damascenus. Some Difficulties in the Sacred Text cleared.

THE next of the confederate nations invaded by *David*, after the conquest of *Moab*, were the *Syrians* of *Zobab*, or, as *Ptolemy* calls it, *Zaba*, (whose eastern border was the *Euphrates*) then under the dominion of *Hadadezer* son of *Rebob*, who seems now to have united the several lesser principalities, which subsisted there about the beginning of *Saul's* reign, into one monarchy*: and that he was such a monarch, is clearly collected from 2 *Sam.* x. 19. where we learn, that he had several kings in subjection to him.

As *Syria* was a part of the earth early peopled after the flood, this nation hath

* *Hadadezer* is here called king of *Zobab*, whereas *Saul's* contest was with the kings of *Zobab*. 1 *Sam.* xiv. 47.

214 *An Historical Account of*

without doubt a fair claim to the honour of great antiquity; although we cannot, with certainty, carry it altogether so high as the *Arabs* do, who pretend that *Adam* was there formed, and shew the place of his formation, near *Damascus*, together with that of *Abel's* murder.

IT is, I think, agreed, that in the earlier ages of the world men were governed by the heads of families, under the name of kings; and as one of these prevailed over the rest, many principalities united made a monarchy; and monarchies have generally been established, earlier or later, in proportion to the antiquity of the nation; and the veneration paid to the founder of the monarchy frequently carried his name from father to son, and continued it down to his late posterity. This I take to have been the case of *Hadad-ezer*; inasmuch as *Nicolaus* of *Damascus* tells us of one *Hadad* king of *Damascus*, who warred with *David*, and was defeated by him near the *Euphrates*, whose posterity were called by his name for ten generations*.

Now

* *Josephus* tells us, that this *Hadad* aided *Hadad-ezer* against *David*; but forasmuch as the scripture makes mention of no such man, and *Nicolaus* of *Damascus* lays nothing of his

the Life of King DAVID. 215

Now if this *Hadad* of *Nicolaus Damascenus* be the *Hadadezer* of the scriptures, as the circumstance of his being defeated by *David* at the *Euphrates* demonstrates him to be, it is a fair presumption, that he was the founder of the monarchy; inasmuch as it was his name, not his father's, (for his father's name was *Rebob*) which was conveyed down to his posterity. And forasmuch as the founders of monarchies, if they were men of great eminence, generally became the idols of the people, under their posterity; what if this *Hadad* was originally that idol of the *Syrians*, whose statue, *Macrobius* tells * us, was adorned with rays, inclining towards the earth, to express his beneficence? Especially since *Nicolaus* of *Damascus* tells us, he was the most excellent of all the *Syrian* kings: and, forasmuch as *ezer* in the *Hebrew* signifies help or aid, I submit it to the skilful in that language, whether this might not have been an epithet added to the name of that prince, to signify his readiness to aid and support every one that his aiding *Hadadezer*, I take this to be a mistake of that historian, which might easily be occasioned by his great distance from the times of which he wrote.

* Lib. I. cap. 23.

216 *An Historical Account of*

needed his assistance; as if we should call him in our tongue, *Hadad the helper*. Now *Hadad* in the *Syrian* language is the name of the sun, and signifies in its literal construction, *one* (as the same *Macrobius* informs us): and what could be a more natural or significant emblem of a beneficent monarch, than a statue of the sun, with his rays inclining to the earth? And if the son of *Rebob* was such a prince, what name could he more naturally assume, upon his aspiring to the monarchy, than that of *Hadad*, or the sun, a most beneficent being, which sees no equal or rival in the sphere of his activity? How godlike were the character, and how glorious the condition, of kings, did ambition only incite them to superior sway, from the divine impulse to superior and more extensive beneficence! If any thing could make idolatry pardonable, such princes would; inasmuch as they are beyond all question the noblest emblems of the Divinity.

WHETHER *Hadadexer* invaded *David*, or was invaded by him, is not clear from the text, which only says, that *David smote him, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates*. Now some understand this, as if

the Life of King DAVID. 217

if *Hadadexer* had gone to recover his border upon the confines of the *Euphrates*; in order to which, he passed, without leave given him, through the country of *Judæa*; which *David* not enduring, they came to blows. Others (and as I think more truly) understand by the text, that *David* went to recover his border at the river *Euphrates*; that is, to extend his dominions as far as the grant given by GOD to *Abraham* and his posterity *, (*Gen. xv. 18.*) in these words, *Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates.*

THE particular circumstances and consequences of this engagement are no further related than thus; that *David* took from him (*Hadadexer*) a thousand chariots, and seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen; and *David* bought all the chariot-horses, but reserved of them for an hundred chariots. That number probably was no more than was necessary for the service of his state and household. He hamstringed the

* And at several times very particularly confirmed to *Moses*, *Exod. xxiii. 31.* *Numb. xxxiv.* *Deut. i. 7,* &c. and repeated to *Joshua*, *Josh. i. 4.*

horses,

218 *An Historical Account of*

horses, in obedience to the command given by GOD to *Joshua*, *Josh. xi. 6**. and there is no doubt but he burnt their chariots also, in obedience to the same command; and that he did so, may I think be clearly inferred from the 9th verse of the xlvth Psalm, composed in thanksgiving to GOD upon the conclusion of this war: *He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder,---he burneth the chariot in the fire †*. Now these are in the number of those parts of the sacred writings, which, to my apprehension, demonstrate their divine origin. It is utterly abhorrent from all the principles of human policy, to make either creatures or utensils (when once become our own secure property) either wholly useless, or less useful to all the purposes, for which either human contri-

* *Thou shalt bough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.*

† I have observed before, that it is familiar with *David* to consider a vast hostile host under the idea of a flood of waters; a noble instance of which is to be found in this psalm, v. 3. *Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.---* And I shall only beg leave to add *David's* own comment upon it, as one of the noblest instances of the sublime the imagination can conceive, I had almost said, that heaven itself could inspire!---*The heathen raged---the kingdoms were moved---he uttered his voice---the earth melted.*

vance

vance hath fitted, or Providence appointed them. And therefore *David's* burning so many chariots, and maiming so many horses, taken from the enemy in battle, could only arise from a principle of obedience to the commands of Almighty God, expressly injoining such a conduct to his people. Why it seemed good to infinite wisdom to injoin it, is an inquiry foreign to my present purpose.

WHEN *Hadadezer* was defeated, the *Syrians* of *Damascus* came to his aid, and shared his fate: for *David* slew of them *two and twenty thousand men*.

THAT the *Hadadezer* of the scriptures is the *Hadad* of *Nicolaus Damascenus*, is I think clear from comparing the accounts left of both. *Nicolaus Damascenus* tells us*, that *Hadad*, who reigned over *Damascus*, and the other parts of *Syria*, except *Phœnicia*, made war against *David* the king of *Judæa*, and tried his fortune in many battles, and particularly the last battle at the *Euphrates*, wherein he was beaten, &c. Now we learn from the scriptures, that *Hadadezer* reigned at this time over *Syria*, both

* *Josephus's antiq.* l. vii. c. 5.

on this and the other side of the *Euphrates*; and we hear of no king in *Syria*, except those who were subject to him; consequently *Josephus* must be mistaken, who supposes, contrary to the authority both of *Nicolaus Damascenus* and the scriptures, that two powerful princes, *Hadad* and *Hadadezer*, subsisted in *Syria* at this time. Besides, we hear of no battle which *David* fought at the *Euphrates*, except that fought, as *Nicolaus Damascenus* saith, with *Hadad*, and, as the scriptures say, with *Hadadezer*; therefore the *Hadadezer* of the bible is the *Hadad* of *Nicolaus Damascenus*.

AND here it is very remarkable, that the authority which *Josephus* quotes upon this point, fully confirms the account left us of this matter by the sacred writers, (or rather is confirmed by it) and at the same time confutes his own.

THAT *Hadad* and *Hadadezer* were the same person, may, I think, be further manifested from the xth chap. of the first book of *Kings*; from whence we learn, that *Rezon* the son of *Eliadab* rebelled against his lord *Hadadezer* king of *Zobab* at this time, and seized *Damascus*; which plainly proves, that

that there was no such *Hadad* as *Josephus* supposes then reigning in *Damascus*; and grounds a fair presumption, that *Damascus* was then under the dominion of *Hadadezer*: and if so, then *Hadadezer* is that *Hadad* of *Nicolaus Damascenus*.

Now, these two passages of the sacred story throw light upon one another; one of which tells us, that the *Syrians* of *Damascus* came to the succour of *Hadadezer*; and the other, that *Rezon* fled from his master *Hadadezer*, seized *Damascus*, and set up for himself. --- The *Syrians* of *Damascus*, there being no king mentioned in the scriptures to have reigned over them at that time, the learned authors of *The Universal History*, apprehended to have been a commonwealth; but I rather apprehend, from the passage before us, that they came to the aid of *Hadadezer*, because they were under his dominion; and when they were defeated, *Rezon*, taking the advantage of the reduced condition of his king *Hadadezer*, gathered up the scattered remains of the *Syrians* of *Damascus*, seized the city, and set up for himself, and reigned there, till *David* drove him thence; *Rezon* the son of *Eliadab*, (saith the text) which

fled

222 *An Historical Account of*

fled from his lord Hadadexer king of Zobah. And he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, when David slew them: and they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus, 1 Kings xi. 23, 24.

THE consequence of this defeat of the *Damascene Syrians*, was, that *Syria of Damascus* was after some time brought under *David's* dominion; which being within the bounds of the promised land *, *David* had a right to take into his own possession; altho' for the present he only made them tributaries: for the text informs us, that he put garisons in *Syria of Damascus*; and then adds, that the *Syrians*, by which, I apprehend, is meant the *Syrians of Damascus*, (the *Syrians* last-mentioned) *became servants to David, and brought gifts.*

How great a monarch *Hadadexer* was, and how immense the spoils which *David* took in this war, may, I think, be fairly inferred from what the sacred historian adds; that *David took the shields of gold, that were on the servants of Hadadexer, and brought them to Jerusalem.* How many these were

* Deut. i. 7. xi. 24.

is no-where said: nor can, in my apprehension, be clearly collected from any passage in the sacred writings; altho' the 4th ver. of the ivth chap. of *Solomon's* song seems to ground a probability of their being a thousand: *Thy neck is like the tower of David, builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.*

THE expression of shields hanging on a tower, as *Grotius* very ingeniously imagines, alludes to the ear-rings, pendants, and other ensigns of gold, then worn by women of high rank in *Judæa*, as ornaments of the neck; and it is certain, the allusion would hold but ill, if those shields were not of gold*.

As *Alexander the Great* had his silver-shielded soldiers †, *Hadadexer*, it seems, had his golden.

It hath been the practice of many princes to make the arms of their soldiers ornamental

* It may be objected, that *David* could scarce be imagined to have had a thousand shields of gold, when *Solomon*, who was much richer, had but five hundred in all; two hundred targets, and three hundred shields. I answer, That *David* might have had more, altho' he made none. Besides, *Solomon's* shields were ornaments, not of his citadel, but of his house of the forest of *Lebanon*.

† *Argyraspides*.

and

224 *An Historical Account of*

and precious ; partly from the love of splendor and magnificence, and partly to influence the courage of those that carried them : since nothing else could secure them from becoming a property and a prey to the enemy. At least, there is good reason to believe, that it was upon this principle, that great *Roman* emperor, *Alexander Severus*, instituted his *chrysaepides*, or soldiers with golden shields (altho' historians give it another turn); since it cannot be imagined, how a prince of so much wisdom, and such severity of virtue, whose whole life was so abhorrent from every suspicion of vanity, could be acted in this point, by any other principle.

BUT, however that may be, no imputation of that kind (as I apprehend) lies against *David*, upon this head. Indeed, as he was not permitted to see his treasures expended upon the temple, it is not improbable, but that he suffered these shields to retain their form as long as he lived ; but I think it pretty demonstrable at the same time, that he devoted them to the adorning of the temple, whenever it should be erected ; inasmuch as they are not excepted out of the spoils

said to be spoils dedicated by him : and we hear nothing of them among the spoils of *Jerusalem*, upon the taking of the city.

IF *Hadadezer* had superfluous gold enough to shape into shields, it is highly probable the rest of his treasure must have been immense : as the quantity of brass now taken, undoubtedly was ; it being expressly said, that *from Betab and Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much brass.* 2 Sam. viii. 8. A relation, whether of the same transaction, or some other like it, is transmitted to us in the first book of *Chron.* chap. xviii. with this variation ; *Likewise from Tibbath, and from Chun, cities of Hadarezer, brought David very much brass : wherewith Solomon made the Brasen-sea, and the pillars, and the vessels of brass.*

THE sacred historian next proceeds to tell us, that when *Toi*, king of *Hamath*, heard that *David* had smitten all the host of *Hadadezer*, that is, both his first army at the *Euphrates*, and that which came to his aid from *Damascus*, (for the word *all* comprehends both, and plainly implies both to have been his forces) then *Toi* sent *Foram* his son

226 *An Historical Account of*

unto king *David*, to salute him ; or, as the text might be otherwise understood, to make peace with him, and to congratulate him upon his victories over *Hadadezer* ; which very seasonably diverted his army from *Toi*, with whom *Hadadezer* was then at war : and partly, as an acknowledgment of the deliverance wrought for him, and partly to purchase his friendship, *Toi* sent presents of a considerable value to *David*, by his son ; *vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass*. All which, with all the spoils won from all the neighbouring nations, all around him, the *Syrians*, the *Moabites*, the *Ammonites*, the *Philistines*, the *Amalekites*, *David*, with a bounty and a piety unprecedented, and (I am sorry to say) but rarely and poorly imitated, dedicated to God ; that God, whose aid overthrew his enemies ; and whose providence *preserved him, whithersoever he went* ; as the sacred historian twice observes, in the compass of a few verses.

How many battles *David* fought against the *Syrians*, the sacred historians have been no way solicitous to inform us. *Nicolaus of Damascus* tells us, that *Hadad* tried his
fortune

fortune with *David* in many battles before that at the *Euphrates*, where he was beaten; and the sacred writers give us to understand, that there was one fought, as it should seem, a considerable time after this; which, altho' not so fatal to the *Assyrians*, in the event, as some of the preceding, yet more redounded to the honour of *David* as a captain, than any of them. This is sufficiently implied (I wish it were more fully illustrated) in these words of the sacred writer (2 Sam. viii. 13.): *And David gat him a name, when he returned from smiting of the Syrians, in the valley of Salt, eighteen thousand.* Now the word which we render *smiting*, is in the original, *his smiting*; which plainly shews this to have been the proper and personal action of *David*, at least so far as to imply his being present at the battle, and commanding in it; which some * criticks not carefully enough attending to, have confounded this atchievement with another of the same nature, related of *Abiskai* in the first book of *Chron.* xviii. 12. where it is said, that *Abiskai the son of Zeruiab slew of the*

* Or, to speak more freely, all of them that ever I met with.

228 *An Historical Account of*

Edomites in the Valley of Salt, eighteen thousand.

Now the number slain in both actions being the same, the war the same, and the place of action apparently the same, criticks have imagined, that *Aram* (the *Hebrew* name of *Syria*) hath been transcribed by mistake for *Edom*; a mistake, which might more easily be occasioned by the likeness of the letters א and ע in the *Hebrew* tongue. And indeed, if there were no more variety in the names or the relations of the facts, than what might be occasioned by the mistake of one letter for another like it, the criticism had been well founded. But, in fact, there is a great deal; and such, as it is impossible should be the effect of any mistake *, as any man, that compares them, will quickly be convinced.

BUT still the question returns, How the war, place of action, and numbers slain, could be the same, and yet the actions different? I answer, That two different actions

* In the first place (besides the distinction last-mentioned grounded upon the letter of the text, 2 *Sam.* viii. 13.) *Edom* hath one letter in it (א) more than *Aram*: in the next place, the text 2 *Sam.* viii. hath *from Aram* --- and the *spoil of Hadadezer*, &c. that of 1 *Chron.* xviii. 11. hath, *from Edom*, without any mention of *Hadadezer*. And in the last place, the text 2 *Sam.* hath *melach*; that of 1 *Chron.* *hamalach*.

of the same kind might easily be atchieved in the same war; and the numbers slain in each, be nearly the same (for in such cases men count only by round numbers); and two very remote and different places may be called by the same name; which might occasion all the difficulty. And this is undoubtedly the case here, it being well known, that there were in *Syria* two *Valleys of Salt*; one in *Syria* properly so called, to the north-west, within four hours of *Aleppo*; and another, at a great distance, in *Cœlesyria*, to the south-east, near *Palmyra*; in that course, which the *Edomites* should naturally be supposed to take in their march to the aid of *Hadadezer*; as that, wherein *David* is said to have slain the *Syrians*, is in that region, where the *Syrians* of *Damascus* might naturally be supposed to have assembled, to the same end: a circumstance which no critick took under his consideration; (altho' there be a plain foundation for it in the *Hebrew* text, one being there called *a valley*, and the other *the * Valley of Salt*) and which, if it had been considered, (with other circum-

* Doubtless implying some distinction then well known.

230 *An Historical Account of*

stances before-mentioned) might easily have removed all the difficulty upon this point.

IN consequence of this victory, we are told, that *David* put garisons in *Edom*: *Througout all Edom put he garisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants*: and there is reason to believe from the xxiii^d ch. of the first book of *Kings*, ver. 47. that they were ruled by a viceroy under him. Then began to be fulfilled that extraordinary prediction to *Rebekah*, when the infants struggled within her, in the time of her travail — *Two nations are in thy womb — and the elder shall serve the younger*; a prediction, which, altho' related by *Moses*, *Gen.* xxv. 23. was delivered to *Rebekah*, (and confirmed by *Isaac* *) long before he was born; and not begun to be fulfilled, 'till many centuries after his death.

THEN also was fulfilled that prophecy of *Balaam's*, *Num.* xxiv. *Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.*

BEFORE I conclude this chapter, I must take notice, that there is one difficulty of moment yet remaining; which stands thus:

* *Gen.* xxvii.

— It is said in the viiith chap. of the second book of *Sam.* ver. 14. That *all they of Edom became David's servants*; and yet in the first book of *Kings*, xi. 16. it is expressly said, that *Joab cut off every male in Edom.*

I ANSWER, That the expression of *cutting off every male*, must necessarily be understood, agreeably to the practice of the *Jews*, and the commands of GOD to them, in relation to their enemies; which stood thus (*Deut.* xx. 10, &c.): When they came up to any hostile city, they were to offer them peace, on condition that they submitted; and so to receive them as tributaries: but if they refused to submit, they were, upon taking the city, to *cut off all the males.* And so the expression relating to *Joab*, 1 *Kings* xi. must be understood; *viz.* he cut off all the males of those cities that resisted, throughout all *Edom*: for that he did not destroy all the males throughout the whole country, is evident enough from the whole tenour of the sacred history. Moreover, they who arraign *David's* mercy, in supposing him to have slain such numbers of unoffending and unresisting men, without any authority from GOD, have not, perhaps, sufficiently consi-

dered, how inconsistent it was with any degree of good policy, to lessen unnecessarily the number of his own subjects; since that were, in effect, to lessen his own tribute.

BESIDES this, *David* (as I lately observed, on a like occasion) was a prophet: and there is no question, but he well understood the prophecy of *Balaam*, in relation to his conquest over *Edom*; and executed it, according to the true meaning and intention of it. Now the prophet, after he had said, *Edom shall be a possession*, &c. adds, *Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion; and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city*; that is, shall execute the commands of God, and cut off all those males of every resisting city in *Edom*, that survive the taking of it. And therefore they who think the execution upon the *Edomites*, extended further, interpret the text neither agreeably to mercy, policy, prophecy, or historical truth.

IF it be still thought, that this was making war with great severity; especially, if renouncing their religion was (as it is generally believed) one condition exacted by the *Hebrews*, upon the submission of the idolatrous

trous nations, with whom they warred; I answer, that such conditions were no way hard upon the aggressors; as the *Edomites* now were: and as to the condition of renouncing the abominations of their idolatry, (since they did not oblige them to become *Jews*) that, in reality, is little more than *Gelo* exacted of the *Carthaginians*, when he conquered them; viz. that they should no more sacrifice their children to *Saturn**.

LET me be indulged to close this chapter, with a short conjecture in relation to *Abishai's* defeat of the *Edomites*, in the *Valley of Salt*, &c.

WE are told in the xith chap. of the first book of *Kings*, That *Hadad* stole away into *Egypt* at the time that *Joab* went up to bury his dead. In the absence of *Joab*, the command of the army naturally devolved upon *Abishai* his brother. That *Joab* took with him some forces to bury his dead, is not to be

* *Esau* having married two wives out of one of the accursed nations, (the *Hittites*) his posterity the *Edomites* fell early into all their corruptions; of whom *Moses* saith, (*Deut. xii. 31.*) *Every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods. For even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.*

doubted;

234 *An Historical Account of*

doubted; and that some part of the country was thereby left unguarded, is evident enough from *Hadad's* escape in that interval. What then can be more natural, than to suppose, that the *Edomites*, taking advantage of *Joab's* absence with a part of the army, attempted upon *Abishai* in that interval; and were defeated by him in the *Valley of Salt*?

OR suppose *Abishai* to have commanded a separate army, from that of *Joab's*; or to have been upon his march towards him, with new supplies; (which I rather imagine to have been the case) nothing was more natural, than for the *Edomites* to make the same attempt upon him, in the absence of his brother, to intercept the reinforcement; as *M. Livius* intercepted that which *Asdrubal* was bringing to the aid of his brother *Hannibal*---- (*Liv. l. xxvii.*)

AND now did *David*, as I am well satisfied from the genius of the composition, sing out triumphantly, and with a new introduction, suited to the occasion, *Psalms* cviii. what, in the beginning of his reign, he sang only in a spirit of prophecy; *God hath spoken in his holiness, &c.---I will divide Shechem, &c. Moab is my wash-pot, over Edom will I cast out*

out my shoe *; upon Philistia will I triumph.

It evidently appears from the beginning of this Psalm, that *David* was then in triumph over the hostile nations: *My heart is ready, O God ---- I will sing, and celebrate even my own glory. Awake, lute and lyre; I will early awake myself. I will confess thee among the people, O God; and sing thee among the nations (for great above the heavens is thy mercy, and to the skies thy truth). Be exalted above the heavens, O Lord; and over the whole earth thy glory! That thy beloved may be delivered, save with thy right hand, and bear me. God hath spoken in his holiness, &c. I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth, &c. Moab is my wash-pot. —* This is an introduction, very different from that distressful complaint, in which the same words are prefaced in the ixth Psalm: which plainly shews *David's* situation to be now very different from what it was at that time. —

* Casting the shoe upon a piece of ground, I take to be the antient form of taking possession among the Jews, perhaps with some allusion to that promise of God to Moses, and of Moses to Israel, *Deut. xi. 24. Every place, whereon the soles of your feet shall tread, shall be yours, &c.*

How

236 *An Historical Account of*

How finely is the noblest spirit of piety, and of poetry, united in this hymn! How delicate this address to his lyre, to be ready at his call! to be early awake, and prepared for it; for he was resolved to be stirring betimes. The greatness of the occasion required it; which was no less, than to sing out the praises of the Almighty, and celebrate his glory to the whole world around him! Filled with this glorious design, which had taken intire possession of his heart, he immediately declares he will execute it: — *I will confess thee among the people, O God; and sing thee among the nations!* And forgetting his address to his lyre, instantly breaks out into raptures upon the truth and mercy of his god. — *Great above the heavens is thy mercy, and to the æther * thy truth!* alluding doubtless to the purity and transparency of that heavenly substance, which render it the aptest and the finest emblem of truth.

* So I think the word שִׁחִיבִי should be rendered; which, in the root, signifies *to break in the finest parts*.

C H A P. XVII.

*A short Account of DAVID's ministers
—His Cherethites, and Pelethites.*

THE sacred historian, having crowded so many great events (recounted at large in the two last chapters of this history) into the compass of a few lines, rests a little, to reflect upon the state of *David's* kingdom, at this time. He had now subdued his enemies all around him, and stretched his dominion, nearly to the bounds assigned to it by Almighty God; and was thoroughly established in it. *David* (saith the sacred writer) *reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people.*

Now it was, in all probability, that the divine wisdom and goodness vouchsafed to admonish him, in that noble lesson to princes, recounted in his last words (2 Sam. xxiii. 3.): *The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.* The sacred writer, inspired by the same Spirit, no
sooner

238 *An Historical Account of*

fooner tells us of *David's* reigning over all *Israel*, but he immediately adds, his fitting in judgment, and distributing justice to his people; well implying, that this was truly to be a king, to protect his people from their enemies abroad, and to administer the civil government with justice at home. Then did he sing in the xcixth *Pfalm*, ver. 4. *The king's strength also loveth judgment: thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.*

WHOEVER peruses this *Pfalm*, will find, that *David*, here, as every-where else, considers GOD as the King of *Israel*, and himself only as his deputy. To this purpose are those expressions in the beginning of this *Pfalm*; *The Lord reigneth — the Lord is great in Sion.* —

IT is true, *David* delighted to exert all the power that GOD had given him, to its true purposes: *The king's strength also loveth judgment*, but it was in reality GOD that executed them all — *Thou dost establish equity; thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.* Then follows the one inference always drawn from every position of *David's*:--- That GOD

is

the Life of King DAVID. 239

is ever to be worshipped and glorified : *Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his foot-stool: for he is holy.*

BUT to proceed :

THE sacred writers no sooner give us an account of *David's* executing judgment and justice, but they immediately add a list of the great officers then employ'd by him. For, as a principal part of the king's wisdom, as well as his felicity, consists in the choice of able ministers, to discharge the great offices of the state ; the sacred historians seem to have thought it a kind of justice due to *David's* ministers, to record their names to all future generations. And therefore they inform us, that *Joab the son of Zeruiab* * (the king's near kinsman) *was over the host* ; that is, was, in the phrase of our times, captain general ; and *Jehoshaphat, the son of Abiud, recorder* † ; that is, as it is generally believed, remembrancer, or writer of *chronicles* ; an employment of no mean estimation in the eastern world, where it was cu-

* *Zeruiab* was the king's sister.

† They who imagine that this was an office like that of Lord Chancellor with us, seem to forget the constitution of the *Jewish* commonwealth, where there was no room for such an employment.

240 *An Historical Account of*

stomary with kings, to keep daily registers of all the transactions of their reigns. A trust, which whoever discharged to purpose, must be let into the true springs and secrets of action ; and consequently, must be received into the inmost confidence.

THE persons next recounted, as of eminence in the court of *David*, at this time, are two priests; *Zadok, the son of Abitub, and Abimelech, the son of Abiathar*. It seems, it made no part of *David's* politicks, to exclude the priesthood from any share in the administration of civil affairs; and much less from advising even in things ecclesiastical. He thought it no part of true political wisdom, to preclude himself from the advice and assistance of an order of men, who, from the nature of their office, education, and institutions, must, in the ordinary course of things, be some of the wisest, and most virtuous (not to say the most religious) men in the realm. I am far from insinuating, that this order of men should preside in the affairs of all wise and well-ordered states. That extreme should, I think, be avoided, as much as this: but certainly there is a temperament of true wisdom between both ; at least, in all societies,

ties, where true religion is deemed an essential of true policy.

WHY *Abiathar* the high-priest, who had formerly so well deserved of *David*, was not now in the first degree of favour with him, is not easy to say. Possibly *David* had, by this time, discerned in him something of that busy, factious, turbulent spirit, which discovered itself so openly in the close of his reign: a spirit, the most alien from the true character of GOD's ministers; the most unbecoming, and most invidious, that can be imagined; and such, as from the insinuations of designing men, and the errors of the undiscerning, (who always charge the vices of men upon their professions) hath more injured that sacred order, than all the other machinations of their enemies.

THE next officer in this honourable list of *David's* ministers, is, *Seraiah the scribe*; supposed to be the king's secretary of state, or prime counsellor in the law*: and the

* Dr. *Patrick* saith, that as the *Hebrew* word *sopher*, which we translate *scribe*, imports something of learning, (as the word *scribe* in the new testament doth) he takes him to have been the king's prime counsellor in the law: and others think, there were two of this character; an ecclesiastical, and a civil.

242 *An Historical Account of*

next, the captain of his life-guard; *Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, a valiant man of Kabzeel*. *Benaiah* was one of *David's* three worthies of the second order; eminent for many great exploits, of which three only are particularly recounted by the sacred historians. He slew two lion-like * men of *Moab*: he slew a lion, in that season when lions are fiercest, most hungry, and, of consequence, most eager for prey, *in the snow* †; and he slew a large and well-made *Egyptian*, armed with a spear; tho' he himself had nothing in his hand but a staff; he assaulted, disarmed him, and slew him with his own weapon. There seems to have been something in the fortitude of *Benaiah* similar and congenial to that of *David*: and possibly that was the reason why he made him commander of the *Cherethites* and *Peletites*, the king's life-guard.

I now imagine I hear the curious reader calling upon me, to give some account of

* The *Hebrew* word signifies a lion of God; that is, a very great lion: so probably the *Moabites* called a very valiant man then, as the *Arabs* do now.

† The text tells us, He slew him *in the midst of a pit*; or, as the original word may otherwise be rendered, *a cave*, to which he probably traced him in the snow; and where he must fight him to great disadvantage.

these

these prætorian guards * of *David's*, his *Cherethites* and *Pelethtites*, before I proceed further: and I shall gratify it, the best I can, in a few words. And as none of the conjectures of the criticks upon this point have given me satisfaction, the reader will not, I hope, be displeased to have one or two of another kind, laid briefly before him.

THAT *Cherethite* is another word for *Philistine*, appears clearly from *Zephaniab* ii. 5. *Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea-coasts, the nation of the Cherethites: the word of the Lord is against you, O Canaan, the land of the Philistines* †. — That *David's* guards were native *Philistines* ‡ of his mortal enemies, is not to be imagined; even altho' we should suppose them profelytes. For how could their being profelyted, more effectually

* *Josephus* calls them *σωματοφύλακες*, *keepers of the body*.

† Also from *Ezek.* xxv. 16.

‡ Some imagine, that he chose his guards from amongst the *Philistines*, as some *European* princes do theirs from the *Swiss*; but they forget, that the *Swiss* are christians, and either *Popish* or *Protestant* princes may choose from amongst them, troops of their own religion; which was not the case of *David* with the *Philistines*. In the next place, foreign troops have, I believe, generally been deemed the proper guards of tyrants, who did not dare to trust their lives to their own subjects.

244 *An Historical Account of*

recommend the fidelity of any men to him, than being natives of his own country, and known and tried subjects? The only question then is, why any of his own subjects should be called *Cherethites* *; and the answer to that is obvious. They were called so, from their having gone with him into *Philistia*, and continued there with him, all the time that he was under the protection of *Achish*. These were they, who resorted to him from the beginning, in his utmost distress; and clave to him in all his calamities: and it is no wonder, if men of such approv'd fidelity were in a more intimate degree of favour and confidence with the king; and enjoyed, among other privileges, an exemption from the authority of the captain-general, and were placed under peculiar commanders. And I believe it will be no uncommon thing, in the history of any country, to find legions, and bands of soldiers, denomi-

*The *Philistines* are considered by *Jeremiah* as strangers, from the isle of *Caphthor*: and the septuagint always translate the word *Philistine*, by that of stranger, ἀλλόφυλος. And the isle of *Caphthor* is believed by learned men, and I think proved by *Calmet*, to be the isle of *Crete*. So that *Cerethim* or *Crethim*, allowing for the *Hebrew* idiom, is literally *Cretans*, or *Philistines* from *Crete*.

nated,

nated, not from the place of their nativity, but that of their residence — as general *Monk's* troops, who sojourned with him in *Scotland*, were called *Coldstreamers*, (and some of the same corps, I believe, are still called by the same name) from a place in *Scotland*, where they had resided for some time; notwithstanding that they were native *English*.

Now, as the *Cberethites* were, as I apprehend, that body of troops which clave to *David* from the beginning, and went with him into *Philistia*; the *Peletbites* I apprehend to have been a body of troops, made up of those valiant men, who resorted to him when he was there (I mean, when he resided at *Ziklag*, but still under the protection of *Achish*); among whom I find one *Pelet*, the son of *Azmaveth*, (1 *Chron.* xii. 3.) who, as I apprehend, became their captain; and from whom they were called *Peletbites*; as the soldiers disciplined by *Fabius* and *Ipbicrates*, were called *Fabians* and *Ipbicratians* *; and as, under the later emperors, the soldiers were commonly denominated

* *Cornel. Nep. in Ipbicrate.*

246 *An Historical Account of*

from their commanders: unless we suppose them rather denominated from *Peleth*, the son of *Jonathan* *, who was of the king's own tribe.

Now as the *Cberethites* adhered to *David*, and followed his fortune from the beginning, they justly held the first degree of favour with him: and therefore they are always placed before the *Pelethites*, who only resorted to him when he was in *Ziklag*; and for that reason were only intitled to the second degree of favour.

* 1 *Chron.* ii. 33.

CH A P. XVIII.

DAVID *inquires after Saul's Posterity, and finds Mephibosheth, a surviving Son of Jonathan's, whom he treats as his own.*

DAVID, now, once more, enjoyed a short interval of peace, like a gleam of sun-shine in the intermittings of a storm; and he employ'd it as became him. His prosperity had hitherto in no degree overset him; on the contrary, the blessings of God upon him, made him every day better. His gratitude to his Divine Benefactor had lately exerted itself in a resolution of building a most magnificent temple to his honour, from a noble purpose of giving such a display of glory to the worship of the true God, as the world had hitherto (as far as I can find) conceived no notion of: and he had thus far made a noble provision for the work. Religion was his first care; and friendship now became his second. He recollected the strong and solemn ties of friendship between him

and *Jonathan*, confirmed by the most sacred oaths and engagements; and his present retirement from the hurry and din of war, left him at leisure to reflect upon them, and take proper measures to fulfil them.

It is not, I think, to be imagined, but that he well knew there yet survived one of that dear friend's sons: and I believe the humane and religious reader will own, that he hath often felt pangs at his heart, for *David's* so long seeming neglect of that most valuable and amiable friend's only son. But I believe it will appear to him, upon better inquiry, that since he knew him to be under the protection of a very considerable family, where he wanted no necessary or convenience of life, looking out for a rival to his throne, before it was thoroughly established to him, was not altogether so consistent with the principles of political prudence. And perhaps this is one reason, why the sacred writer lets us know, that his throne, was now thoroughly established, before he made any inquiry after *Saul's* posterity. For when he hath informed the reader upon this head, and recounted the train of *David's* officers and ministers,

ministers, he immediately subjoins an account of this inquiry; telling us, that *David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?* And hearing of a servant, that had belonged to *Saul*, whose name was *Ziba*, he sent for him, and inquired whether any yet remained of his master's family; that he might do them good offices. The expression in the original is very remarkable; *Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him?* That is, that he might treat him with a benignity resembling that of Almighty God; who continues his kindness even to the descendants of those that love him. And *Ziba* informed him, that *Jonathan* had yet a son, lame on his feet, whose name was *Mephibosheth*; and the king, inquiring where he was, sent and brought him from the house of *Machir*, the son of *Ammiel*, a very considerable and wealthy man * in *Lo-debar*, a remote corner of the country, beyond *Jordan*; where *Mephibosheth* judged he might be concealed

* That he was so, appears from 2 *Sam.* xvii. 27, 28. where we find him and *Bersillai* supplying the king with great plenty of all necessaries.

with

250 *An Historical Account of*

with more secrecy and security : but *David's* friendship found him out in his retirement, and called him to court.

POOR *Mephibosheth* had contracted a lameness, from the fall he got, when his nurse was running away with him, after the defeat of mount *Gilboa*; and so was in the condition of *Palæmonius*, in *Orpheus's Argonauticks*, v. 209.

Σίμετο δὲ σφύρα δισσὰ, πόδας δ' ἐκ ἥεν ἀρρωσ.
Lame of both legs, and fitted ill with feet.

When he appeared before *David*, he fell upon his face, and did him reverence. Our account of this interview is very short; but I imagine, from the nature of the thing, that it must have been very tender and affecting on the part of *David*; as it was apparently not without terror, on the part of *Mephibosheth*: however we are only told, that the king called him by his name, and spoke kindly to him, bidding him fear nothing, and assuring him of his favour, and declaring that he would treat him as one of his own children. *Mephibosheth*, (saith he) *fear not; for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake; and will re-*
store

the Life of King DAVID. 251

store thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually. In return to which, *Mephibosheth* bowed himself before the king, with expressions of the utmost gratitude and humility: *What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog* (that is, so abject and so insignificant a creature) *as I am?*

THE king then sent for *Ziba*, and told him he had given *Mephibosheth* all that belonged to *Saul*, and to all his house; appointing him at the same time to the tillage and culture of the land, and ordering him to bring in a proper portion of the fruits of the earth to his master, by way of rent; that is, as *Grotius* and *Dr. Trap* observe, he made *Ziba Mephibosheth's colonus partiaris*, his farmer, upon the terms of bringing in to his master, yearly, half the annual produce of grain and fruits. And from the character and condition of that man, at this time, *David*, in all appearance, could not have chosen a fitter person, on whom to devolve that trust. He was an old servant of the family, and then deemed a faithful one: he was in the secret of *Mephibosheth's* concealment,

252 *An Historical Account of*

ment, and consequently confided in by him : and besides this, the text tells us, that he had fifteen sons, and twenty servants, by whose aid he could occupy the ground to more advantage ; which seems to be a principal reason why *David* employed him. *Thou therefore, (saith the king) and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him ; and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat, viz. both for himself and his household (for Mephibosheth had now a son, whose name was Micah, and doubtless a family also) ; but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall always eat bread at my table.*

TO this command of the king, *Ziba* professed a ready obedience: *According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do.* And whilst he was saying this, the king's heart overflowing with joy at the thoughts of having it in his power to do honour to any of *Jonathan's* posterity, interrupts him with a second declaration in his favour : *As for Mephibosheth, he shall eat at my table, like one of the king's sons.*

THE text then adds an account of *Mephibosheth's* having a young son at this time,
and

and of all *Ziba's* family immediately becoming his servants; and concludes with these words: *So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem; for he did eat continually at the king's table, although he was lame* (for so I think it should be translated) *on both his feet*; that is, altho' his figure was not such as might grace a king's table.

THE observation is obvious, and few of the criticks have failed to make it, that from the number of servants employed to occupy *Mephibosheth's* estate, it should seem to have been very considerable; but how considerable, I cannot take upon me so much as to conjecture.

THERE is another observation seemingly as obvious, and that is, that nothing could be a better judged beneficence, or a surer or more refined proof of eternal friendship to *Jonathan*, than *David's* tying down his son to that way of living with him, and with his children, which would give him a thousand daily opportunities of testifying his gratitude, his tenderness, his affection for the best of friends; and was at the same time the most natural means to perpetuate this friendship,

254 *An Historical Account of*

ship, and to propagate it to both their posterities.

IF any man doubt, whether this conduct should be placed to the score of a most refined and exalted virtue in *David*, let it at least be numbered among that prince's peculiar felicities.

IT is not, I think, to be doubted, that most of *David's* Psalms were written as occasions required. The sacred historian informs us, that *David* had employed this interval of peace, in judgment and justice to his people: he very well knew, that mercy was often an essential of justice, and at all times its most heavenly office; and that he owed this duty to himself, as much as to any of his subjects; for *mercy and truth uphold the throne*. He well knew his solemn engagements to *Jonathan*: Should he not do justice to them? His meanest subjects shared the blessings of his mercy: Should the son of *Jonathan* be precluded from it?

LET it then be presumed, that *David*, in this way of thinking, published his resolution of shewing kindness to the seed of *Saul*: Could any thing be more natural than for the enemies of that house, and all the
court-

court-favourites, to be immediately alarmed, as one man? Could any of them hope to be the king's favourite, upon the same foot with the son of *Jonathan*? Who would be so favourably and so partially listened to? Was he to eat and to drink with the king every day of his life, to have every day an opportunity of insinuating himself into his good graces, to lie in his bosom, and to have his ear in his most open and unguarded hours? What a load of envy and obloquy must this draw upon poor *Mephibosheth*? And how naturally would calumny entail all *Saul's* vices upon him on this occasion? pride, inconstancy, treachery.

ON the other hand, it may easily be imagined, what the partizans of the house of *Saul*, and enemies to *David*, would say upon this occasion --- that all these fair pretences and promises in favour of *Saul's* family, were but a specious artifice to get the true heirs to the crown into his hands; and that when he once had them in his power, he would soon find means to rid himself of them. Suppose this to be the true state of the case, when the king published his resolution of taking *Mephibosheth* into favour, as I think, from the nature of the thing, it must

256 *An Historical Account of*

must be; could any thing be more natural, than for *David* to publish such a declaration on that occasion, as should vindicate his own integrity, terrify treachery, and discountenance calumny?

Now suppose we found an authentick declaration of *David* to this purpose, prefaced with an appeal to *GOD*, for his love of mercy, justice, and integrity; and publishing to the whole world his abhorrence of villainy, treachery, calumny, and pride; and professing that he would, to the utmost of his power, discountenance and destroy all men of that character; as he would, on the contrary, favour and protect all those that were truly religious and faithful: I say, suppose such a declaration as that were now extant; to what æra or event of *David's* life, could we so naturally refer it, as to this of receiving *Mephibosheth* into favour?

Now it is beyond all doubt, that such a declaration is still extant, and set forth at large in the cist *Psalms*; as the reader will find from a short perusal of these several parts of it: *My song shall be of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.--- I hate the sins of unfaithfulness; there shall*

no such cleave unto me.---Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I destroy.---Whoso hath also a proud look, and high stomach, I will not suffer him. Mine eyes look upon such as are faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me. Whoso leadeth a godly life, he shall be my servant. There shall no deceitful person dwell in my house: he that telleth lyes shall not tarry in my sight. I shall soon destroy all the ungodly, that are in the land; that I may root out all wicked doers from the city of the Lord.

How noble a declaration was this in a great king! and how worthy the imitation of all the princes of the earth! and how noble a manner was this of publishing declarations to the people, in solemn and sublime hymns to Almighty God; set to suited musick, and sung with joy and transport through the land! at once vindicating innocence, and propagating piety! Let this again be numbered among the felicities peculiar to *David!*

C H A P. XIX.

DAVID's *Embassadors abused by the Ammonites.*—*A War ensues.*

SOME time after the event last related, a neighbour prince, *Nabash* king of the *Ammonites*, died, and *Hanun* his son succeeded him in the throne.

DAVID, it seems, had received some favours from *Nabash*; but when, or of what kind, is not known: some imagine he had kindly entertained some of *David's* family, when others of them were cruelly treated by the king of *Moab*, under whose protection they were placed: and some imagine, that he had kindly intreated *David* himself, when the first *Achish* had driven him away from his court.

As *Nabash* was at mortal enmity with *Saul*, it is very probable, that he took any occasion of treating *David* as well as he could, out of resentment to *Saul* their common enemy. But, whatever the motives to this kindness might be, (which are not always to be too nicely scann'd) *David* thought him-
self

self bound to make the best return he could to it; and accordingly sent ambassadors, to make his compliments of condolence to *Hanun*, and to congratulate him upon his accession to the crown.

WHEN they arrived, the princes of *Ammon* (from what motive is not mentioned) persuaded the king, that these men, apparently sent to do him honour, were not so properly ambassadors as spies, and that their business was to inquire and to search out the true state of his capital; that so, when a proper occasion offered, they might more easily and effectually assault and destroy it.

THE king, too easily yielding to this insinuation, resented this supposed design of *David's*, much more than he should have done, had he known it to be real: and accordingly resolved to do his ambassadors the greatest indignities he could devise. And what these were, we are thus informed: *Hanun* (saith the text) *took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle.* And we are given to understand, that they did this in such a manner, as to expose their nakedness.

THE wearing of long beards, and long garments, was then, as it still is, the fashion of the East, where they were deemed badges of honour; and consequently the cutting off and curtailings of either, regarded as the greatest indignity; nay, in some places, the cutting off the beard, was not only looked upon as matter of the highest reproach, but also of the severest punishment. So it was anciently among the *Indians*, and is at this day among the *Persians**. And it was one of the most infamous punishments of cowardice in *Sparta*, that they who turned their backs in the day of battle, were obliged to appear abroad, with one half of their beards shaved, and the other unshaved†. And as the *Spartans* are said by *Josephus* to be descended from the *Jerus*, possibly this punishment might have been originally derived from them: And if so, then this indignity to *David's* ambassadors, who represented his person, might have been intended as a brand of cowardice upon him. This only is certain, that insult and contumely

* See Dr. *Patrick's* comment upon this passage, vol. II. p. 302.

† *Plut. in Agesilaus.*

were

were added to the indignity: half the beard was cut off, to make them look ridiculous; and half the robe, to make their figures at once more contemptible and indecent; for as breeches made then no part of the Eastern dress, those parts were then of necessity exposed, which decency dictates to conceal.

BUT these indignities were not only insults upon the person of *David*, in those of his ambassadors, but also upon his religion*, which prohibited the cutting off any part of the beard†: and if this prohibition respected the practice of the heathen, who were wont to make an offering of their hair, or beard, to the demons, in behalf of their deceased friends; this insult upon the ambassadors probably meant, that these men, who came to bewail *Nabash's* death, should make an offering of their beards in his behalf.

SOME think *David* wrong in this conduct, and apprehend that he should have had no commerce with this *Ammonite* king*, (*Nabash*)

* They probably exposed their nakedness, to shew their circumcision.

† So Dr. *Patrick* understands by the text, *Levit. xix. 27. Neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard.*

* Being prohibited, as they apprehend, by that precept in relation to the *Ammonites* and *Moabites*, *Deut. xxiii. 6.*

262 *An Historical Account of*

hath) who, it must be allowed, was a monster of cruelty *. But however that may be, this we learn from it, that no demerit or vileness in the author of a benefaction, did, in *David's* estimation, cancel the gratitude due for it.

WHEN *David* heard of the treatment his embassadors had received, who did not know how to return, and were ashamed to shew their faces, under the confusion of the indignity done them; he sent to meet them, and directed them to tarry at *Jericho*, till their beards were grown, and then return.

As *Jericho* had not been rebuilt since the day it was miraculously overthrown, (*Josh. vi.*) the king rightly and humanely judged, that his embassadors would be glad to hide their shame, and conceal themselves to more advantage, in the desolations of that city, till their beards were grown †; nor could any thing be better judged, than this anxiety of
of

Thou shalt not seek their peace, nor their prosperity, all thy days for ever.

* 1 Sam. xi.

† It should seem from the text, that the embassadors had taken refuge there, before *David* sent to them, to tarry there. Possibly *Jericho* might have been then pretty much in the same condition in which *M. Baumgarten* found it in
the

the Life of King DAVID. 263

of *David's* to prevent their being exposed. He well knew, that the dignity of the most excellent things and persons greatly suffers by being once seen in a ludicrous light, that is, in their most opposite extreme; because ideas are then associated in the minds of the spectators, which perhaps can never after be wholly parted *.

How *David* resented the treatment his ambassadors had received, the sacred historians have not thought fit expressly to inform us: but if we may be allowed to reason from his

the beginning of the fifteenth century. He tells us, *Zaccheus's* house was the only house then standing there, and even that without a roof. He then adds, 'There are round about, about a dozen of small cottages, if I may properly call them so; for nothing of building is to be seen in them, being only fenced in with tall hedges of thorns, having within a large place for cattle to stand and be shut up in; but in the middle they have huts or tents, where men used to shelter themselves and goods from the inclemency of the sun and rain.'

Churchill's Travels, vol. I. p. 420.

* And therefore I am astonished how any man of humanity (to throw reason and virtue out of the question) could make that ridicule the test of true excellence, which murdered the best man of the Heathen world; which first debased the dignity of *Socrates* in the eyes of the vulgar, and then brought him to the bar, and to the hemlock! for if *Aristophanes* had not been suffered to ape his person and dress, and ridicule him, in the *Clouds*, *Anytus* and *Melitus* would never have dared to have called him to the bar as a malefactor.

264 *An Historical Account of*

conduct, in all appearance, he considered it as an effect of youthful vanity and rashness in *Hanun*; and so waited to see whether he would take any measures to repair and expiate the injury: for we hear of no warlike preparations made by him, till the *Ammonites* had first hired their confederates, and taken the field. For they, well knowing what they deserved from *David*, set themselves instantly to support what they had done, by dint of arms; and accordingly, not finding themselves singly sufficient for the forces of *David*, the sacred historian informs us, (2 Sam. x.) that *they sent and hired the Syrians of Bethrehab, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand footmen; and of king Maacah, a thousand men; and of Ishtob, twelve thousand men:* and we learn from the first book of *Chronicles* xix. 6, 7. that *Hanun* and the children of *Ammon* sent a thousand talents of silver to hire them chariots and horsemen out of *Mesopotamia*, and out of *Syria-Maacah*, and out of *Zoba*. So they hired thirty and two thousand chariots*,
and

* Some have thought this number of chariots too great: but I own I cannot think so; considering the sum expended, the country and the age in which they were hired, which knew
no

and the king of Maacah, and his people, who came and pitched before Medeba ; a city supposed by most criticks to be upon the borders of Ammon, but in reality in the tribe of Reuben, Jos. xiii. 16. contiguous to which was a large plain, very convenient for the enemy to draw up their chariots upon it in battle-array.

THITHER the *Ammonites*, also gathering together from their several cities, resorted. *And when David heard of it, (the text tells us) he sent out Joab, and all the mighty men, against them.* It is, I think, evident from

no other use of horses in battle, but exercising them in their chariots ; and therefore the same word (רֶכֶב, *receb*) in the *Hebrew*, signifies horseman, and charioteer : and we find a greater number of horsemen slain in a subsequent battle. They that argue against this great number of chariots, ground themselves upon the practice of the subsequent ages, when chariots were much less in use. --- But after all, the same word, *receb*, (I mean the same radicals differently pointed) signifies also chariot and charioteer : and therefore I see no reason why the text should not as well be understood of thirty thousand charioteers, and perhaps better than of so many chariots : and then the number of chariots cannot be supposed to be more than fifteen thousand at most, supposing but two men to a chariot ; and if you suppose more, the number of chariots must be so much the less. And besides all this, it should be considered, that this is that land, from whence *Isaiah* tells us the house of *Jacob* was replenished ; and therefore what he there says of the *Jews*, (*Isa. ii. 7.*) was more strictly true of the *Syrians* ; *Their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots.*

hence,

266 *An Historical Account of*

hence, that *David* waited to see how *Hanun* would conduct himself on this occasion, before he sent out an army against him. Nay, I am, for my own part, satisfied, from the xcivth *Psalms*, (which I apprehend to have been written upon this occasion) that he waited till their extravagance had carried them to such lengths of outrage, as were no longer to be endured; till they wasted his country, and murdered his subjects. And to this I apprehend refer these words (ver. 5, 6.) of this psalm; *They break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thine heritage: they slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless* *.

It appears from many passages in the *Psalms*, (and some in this history) that it was *David's* fixed principle never to indulge his revenge; but refer himself wholly to *GOD* upon all such occasions. And it appears from this part of the sacred history, that he took no step against *Hanun*, till two

* Whoever considers the length of way the *Syrians* were to march to the aid of the *Ammonites*, upon the confines of *Judæa*, will easily apprehend, that this could scarce be done without many hostile incursions and depredations; and much less were they likely to abstain, when two great hostile armies were assembled in the heart of a *Jewish* tribe.

great armies were formed, and in the field, against him. He then ordered out his forces against them, rather to repel an invasion, than revenge an injury. --- And I am satisfied, the reason why he sent out these forces, under the command of *Joab*, rather than conduct them himself, was, because that injury was in a great measure personal to himself; and therefore it better became him to decline all appearance of personal resentment, and commit his cause to the righteous Arbiter of the earth; as he doth in those memorable words, wherewith he begins the xcivth *Psal*m; *O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth, O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself* --- that is, Let thy interposition in this cause be made evident to the world, by the righteousness of the decision. *Lift up thyself, thou Judge of the earth; render a reward to the proud.*

AND as he began, so he ended this *Psal*m, (ver. 16.) in the same way of thinking, by calling to his people, to know who would rise up, not *with him*, but *for him*, against his enemy: *Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers? Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?* For here I
appre-

apprehend the *Psalm* ended, at its first publication. The rest was apparently added, after the ensuing battle. For, when *Joab* took the field, he found himself, I know not how, entrapped and embarrassed in the midst of two great armies; the *Ammonites* before him, drawn up under the wall of the city; and the *Syrians* behind him, extended upon the plains of *Medeba*. Military men will best judge, whether this was not the effect of some oversight, or misconduct, in that captain. However *Joab* was blessed with that distinguishing talent of a great captain, a presence and readiness of mind upon all exigencies: he immediately divided his army into two bodies, one of which he led himself against the *Syrians*, and the other he sent against the *Ammonites*, under the command of his brother *Abishai*; assuring him at the same time, that if he were overpowered by the *Ammonites*, he would send him immediate aid; and commanding *Abishai* to do the same by him, if he found him overpowered by the *Syrians*: concluding with that noblest of all martial speeches, (2 Sam. x. 12.) *Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities*

cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth him good.*

THE *Syrians*, it seems, were the better soldiers; and one reason of their being so, might be, that they had of late, as appears from the course of this history, been more exercised in arms; and therefore *Joab* led the choice of the *Israelite* army against them, and began the attack; which was well judged upon many accounts: first, because it was a proof both to his own army, and the enemy, that he was not intimidated; which was of vast consequence in his present situation. 2dly, Because they were mercenaries, who never think themselves under the same engagements to make an obstinate resistance, as they do that fight for their country †. And, 3dly, because, if they were once routed, who were the better soldiers, the *Ammonites*, intimidated by their defeat, would become an easier conquest to his brother.

THE event answered; the *Syrians* were put to flight; and when the *Ammonites* saw

* We may learn from hence how naturally great dangers inspire sentiments of true religion.

† *Ut quibus temere collectis, neque in victoria decus esset, neque in fuga flagitium.* Tacit. 2 Hist.

them

270 *An Historical Account of*

them turn their backs, the text tells us, *they fled also, and entered into the city.* --- And *Joab*, not being in a condition either to pursue the chariots, (for he had no horse) or to assault or besiege the city, returned to *Jerusalem*; but (it is to be presumed) not till he saw the country freed from the *Syrian* army.

AND now it was, as I apprehend, that *David*, reflecting upon the danger his army had escaped, and partly, perhaps, thro' his own fault, in declining to lead them out in person, added seven more verses to the xcivth *Psalms*; the first of which begins with acknowledging the danger, and ascribing the deliverance to GOD — *Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence, &c.* And not content with this, *David*, again revolving the greatness of the deliverance, (which, perhaps is not to be paralleled in history) composed, or at least sung a second time, another hymn of thanksgiving to GOD, upon this occasion, *Psalms cxxiv* *. which is evidently the thanksgiving of

* *If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say; if it had not been the Lord who was on our side; when men rose up against us: then they had swallowed us*

the Life of King DAVID. 271

of a man whose people were thought a sure prey to their enemies; and yet escaped by the providential interposition of God in their favour. Which was evidently the condition of the *Israelites*, when they were pent in between two great hostile armies; from whence there was no possibility of escaping, but by breaking through them by main force: a condition, and a deliverance, which could never be represented by an apter image, than that which *David* makes use of in the close of this Psalm; a bird caught in a snare, who had no chance for his life, but by breaking it: *Our soul is escaped even as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are delivered.*

up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us: then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: then the proud waters had gone over our soul. --- Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us a prey to their teeth. --- Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.

Our help is in the Name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

CHAP.

C H A P. XX.

The Syrian War finished. — David's Felicities during this Period summed up. — This Book ends.

WHETHER the season of the year was too far advanced to keep the field any longer, or whatever other reason made *Joab* return to *Jerusalem*, with the *Israelite* army; the *Syrians*, who knew how far they had injured and provoked *David*, had good reason to expect they would visit them again, upon the return of the spring: and they made their preparations accordingly.

HADAREZER (for so he is now called, by an easy change of the *Hebrew* letters *d* and *r*, [ד ר] whose similitude is obvious to every eye) assembled his forces, and not finding them of strength sufficient to be confided in, the text tells us, he *sent and brought out the Syrians that were beyond the river Euphrates, and they came to Helam, under the conduct of Shobach, captain of Hadar-*

Hadarezer's host. Which when *David* learnt, and was sufficiently informed concerning them, he gathered the choice troops of his whole realm together, and led them out in person against the enemy; passed the *Jordan*, and arrived at *Helam*, where they found the *Syrians* prepared to receive them; and drawn up in battle array. A battle ensued, and with that, a carnage the greatest of any recorded in *David's* wars. *The Syrians*, saith the sacred writer, *fled before Israel*, and *David slew the men of seven hundred chariots of the Syrians; and forty thousand horsemen* (2 Sam. x. 18.); a relation, which we find a good deal diversified in the first book of *Chronicles*, the xixth chapter, and the 18th verse; where it is said in the *English* version, (which I think very justifiable from the original) that he *slew seven thousand men which fought in chariots, and forty thousand footmen*. Now critics are of opinion, that these seven thousand men which fought in chariots, are the men of seven hundred chariots mentioned in the second book of *Sam.* ten to a chariot; which I think could not be, because then the fashion of their military chariots must have been intirely changed in the compass of one year.

274 *An Historical Account of*

THERE is more to be * said for the article of *footmen*; because the *Chronicles* being a supplement to the books of *Samuel* and the *Kings*; and in the second book of *Samuel*, the historian having made no mention of any footmen slain in this battle, this addition might be made here, to supply that defect. But, however that may be, they both agree, that *David* slew *Shobach*, captain of the hostile host, with his own hands (for his death is personally ascribed to *David* in both†); which the *Romans* made account of, as the highest point of military glory; and such as no more than three of their heroes had ever attained, from the foundation of the common-wealth. Nor was the renown arising from such a conquest, without a foundation of true military glory, in those ages, where personal prowess, and great bodily strength, were always essential ingredients in the character of a great commander; whose personal bravery was the sheet anchor, and only resource of his troops, when hard

* The number of chariots brought into the field the preceding campaign (thirty thousand) on supposition that the text is there rightly translated, must satisfy every reasonable man, that there could not be more than two men to a chariot.

† One says, he smote him; and the other says, he slew him.

pushed

pushed by their enemy; or otherwise reduced to distress of any kind. For, in that case, to vanquish the captain, by dint of superior valour, and dexterity in arms, was, in effect, to dismay and to defeat his forces.

WHERE this city of *Helam*, mentioned in the text, was situated, none of the critics have been able to inform us. But inasmuch as this is evidently the last battle fought by *Hadad* against *David*, (as *Nicolaus Damascenus* witnesses) upon the banks of the *Euphrates*; there can, I think, be but little doubt, that *Helam* was built upon the banks of that river; which probably was one cause of the great slaughter made of the enemy in this battle: inasmuch as, having the *Israelites* before, and the *Euphrates* behind them, they found less room for flight.

THE gaining of this battle, under these advantageous circumstances, effectually finished the *Syrian* war; and established *David's* dominion on that side, to the utmost extent of God's promise to *Abraham*: *From the river Egypt, to the great river, the river Euphrates.* For the sacred historians inform us, That when all the kings that were servants to *Hadarezer*, saw that they were smitten before *Israel*, they made peace with

276 *An Historical Account of*

Israel, and served them: so the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

AND now was *David*, as I conceive, advanced to the highest pitch of earthly glory, fortune, and felicity!

AND here, perhaps the reader may not think it amiss to rest a while; and revolve the several gradations, and signal felicities, by which he arrived to this eminence.

AND first, it is remarkable, that the natural foundation of all this grandeur was laid in the very beginning of a civil war, of five years continuance; which, in all appearance, was wasteful, and would be ruinous, both to him and his people. But whilst his enemies, for that reason, left him unmolested, he employ'd that whole time, partly in gaining over the tribes to him, and partly in training up all those who sided with him, to arms; his own tribe first, and all the rest gradually as they joined him: and all this, under a specious and unsuspected colour of keeping up a proper force against *Ishbosheth* his rival. And as his army at no time exceeded the number of twenty-four thousand men, so small a number created no suspicion, nor gave any jealousy to his neighbours; who
never

never reflected, that these troops were changed every month; and an equal number of new men brought into military discipline: or, if they observed, that it was so, after some time, possibly, this gave them still less suspicion; as apprehending that there was less to be feared from a body of raw, undisciplined men; little considering, that by this monthly and regular rotation, every man in his dominions must in a little time be trained up to arms; and in the course of a few circulations, thoroughly disciplined: as in fact it came to pass. For we find him, in little more than eight or nine years, able to withstand the united force of all his neighbour nations, invading him at once; which perhaps never was the case of any other prince, from the foundation of the world.

It is true, other princes, *Alexander* the great, (for example) and *Charles* the XIIth of *Sweden*, have been combined against, and invaded by some of their neighbours, in the beginning, and, as they deemed it, infancy of their reigns; but I cannot recollect, that ever I heard or read of any general combination, unanimously entered into, against any prince of any nation, and yet totally defeated, except *David*. For what other prince, from
the

278 *An Historical Account of*

the foundation of the world, could cry out with him — *All nations compassed me about, but in the Name of the Lord I have destroyed them?*

IT is obvious to observe, that the advantages derived to *David* from this combination thus defeated, were very great. For, as all these princes, by thus manifesting their hostile intentions against him, gave him, by the law of nature, an unlimited right of exercising hostilities against them, he saw himself at full liberty to invade each of them apart, as he found it most convenient: and accordingly did so; 'till he gradually added all their dominions to his own; and stretched his kingdom to the bounds originally assign'd to it, by Almighty GOD: and in so doing, signally, and beyond all possibility of evasion, fulfilled the most remarkable prophecies, that ever were delivered from the foundation of the world.

AND as these wars were often interrupted, it is remarkable, that *David* filled all his intervals of peace with the best arts of peace, and with the noblest offices and purposes of religion and virtue; establishing true piety, distributing justice, and fulfilling the sacred engagements of friendship. He built a magnificent city; strengthened it
with

with walls, and with a citadel of uncommon magnificence ; adorned it with palaces ; and crowned it with the tabernacle of GOD : completed the public worship of GOD, in all its parts, with a spirit of piety, that never was equalled ; and in an order, and with an attendance, worthy of it.

LET me add, that when *David* seemed weary of war, and his mind was wholly imploy'd in the noblest offices of peace ; when he would gladly have stopped short, and left much of the work assigned him by Almighty GOD, undone ; ---- a new war was forced upon him, in consequence of one of the kindest and most generous acts of friendship ; which ended in extending his dominions to the utmost limits assigned to them (on that side) by the great ruler and arbiter of the universe.

THIS period comprehends a space of about twenty years : during which time, *David* waged eight * several wars ; and finished seven of them : all righteously begun, and successfully ended. And, which is more ex-

* First, The civil war with *Ishboobeth*. Secondly, The *Jebusite* war. Thirdly, The confederate *Philistine* war. Fourthly, the separate *Philistine* war. Fifthly, The war with *Moab*. Sixthly, The first war with *Hadadezer*. Seventhly, The war with *Edom*. Eighthly, The confederate war with *Ammon* and the *Syrians*.

traordinary, he fought no battle, during that whole period, which he did not win ; and assaulted no city, which he did not take.

IN a civil war, of five years continuance he never once lifted up his sword against a subject ; and at the end of it, he punished no rebel, he remembered no offence, he revenged no injury, but the murder of his rival.

WHEN he had subdued his enemies, and established his throne, he remembered his friendship to *Jonathan* ; restored *Mephibosheth* to his estate ; took him to his bosom, and treated him as his own son ; and did every thing in his power, to perpetuate to his posterity, the friendship he owed his father.

To crown all ---- with all these rare and true felicities, their only sure source and security, his religion and his innocence still remained with him : and, had his innocence still remained, his felicities had still continued.

AND here I end this book ; not glad, nor studious to begin another ; which must open a new scene, very different from all the past ; and such as, I own, I cannot think of, without united horror and affliction.

The E N D *of* VOL. II.

